You begin with an idea and a . . . .

# SKETCH

vol. 1 no. 6
$5.95 u.s.
$8.40 can.

## COMICS IN ADVERTISING

## E-COMIC BOOKS

## DIGITAL COVERS

## WEB PAGE DESIGN

## INKING THE "X"

## Brian Michael Bendis
### The Creative Force Behind
### POWERS and ULTIMATE SPIDERMAN

Along with his duties with Sketch Magazine, **Bob Hickey** has been the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest and Tempered Steele. He oversees production work at Sacred Studios which is currently packaging Parts Unknown for Image Comics and has a new Blood and Roses series in the works.
Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions.
www.sacredstudios.com
www.bluelinepro.com
www.racedanger.com

**Chris Riley** has done everything from lettering and paste-up to full comic book production. In his career he has helped to publish over forty comic books for various publishers and self published two of his own books. He has been doing computer coloring for over seven years. Some of his current work includes freelance digital coloring, various CD artwork for bands and DJ's, self publishing his own comic book Brainwalker, creating a Parts Unknown Flash animation, and writing for Sketch Magazine.

**Clint McElroy** has worked in the media for over 25 years. He is currently working as the top-rated afternoon disc jockey at the number one radio station in his market. He has worked for the CBS radio network, covering the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for Brent Musberger's "Monday Night Football" radio broadcasts. He has hosted television programs ranging from real-estate shows to late-night monster movies....and has even moderated the gubernatorial debates for the state of West Virginia. He has made over a hundred appearances on local television news broadcasts over the last 25 years. He has written for the "Comics Buyers Guide" and is currently the writer of a regular column in "Huntington Quarterly Magazine".
He also knows the world of comics. A collector his entire life, Clint (along with Beau Smith) co-wrote and co-produced the popular "Comicast" audio fanzine in the 1990's. He worked as host and contributor on the "Comics Vision" video series. Clint has written titles like "Green Hornet" and "Illegal Aliens", and created the mini-series "Blood is the Harvest" for Eclipse and the very successful "Green Hornet: Dark Tomorrow" mini-series for Now. He also did the movie adaptations for films including "Freejack", "Universal Soldier", and "The Three Ninjas".

**Flint Henry's** comic career began in the waning days of the independent market of the '80's, where his frenetic and violent style enjoyed a popular run on the fondly remembered Grimjack at First Comics. Over the years to follow, some personal favorites include Lawdog; a creator owned character done with longtime friend Chuck Dixon from Marvel/Epic, as well as numerous Batman related projects from DC. He's also produced a variety of comic product for Todd Toys (now McFarlane Toys), Image, SQP Inc, and Chaos!, as well as Eclipse, Dark Horse, Palladium, and others.

**Beau Smith** created and writes Parts Unknown currently at Image Comics, writer of The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls, Wolverine/Shi, Batman/Wildcat and the upcoming cross over-Xena/Wonder Woman.
www.sacredstudios.com/partsunknown

**Tom Bierbaum** with wife Mary has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures a creator owned project by Knight Press.

$M^2$ a.k.a. **Mike Maydak**, is fresh out of the fabled halls of High School, Mike has been taken under-wing as the patawan in training at the Blue Line Pro ranch. He is learning much from the experienced crew at Sketch about the comic industry and has mastered the technique of "getting lunch". He often contributes in the form of graphic design, writing, and editorial work. He is currently attended school at NKU with a creative writing major. On the side, he works on his fantasy novel.

When **Terri Boyle's** not gracing the comic book convention circuit with her magnificent smile or creating the latest fad in web design she offers many of the independent publishers help with their pre-press and graphic design needs.

**Joe Corroney** is the instructor for Comic Book-Cartoon Illustration Class and Electronic Illustration Class at the Columbus College of Art and Design in Columbus, Ohio. He has illustrated for a variety of comic book publishers including Dead-Kid for Knight Press, Blood and Roses for Sacred Studios, Green Lantern for DC Comics, Parts Unknown for Image, and his creator-owned title for World Famous Comics, Death Avenger. He has also illustrated for White Wolf Publishing, Microsoft's Age of Empires trading card game, Men In Black for Sony, and Star Trek for the Paramount Pictures licensee, Last Unicorn Games. Since 1997, Joe has been providing Star Wars artwork for Lucasfilm books and magazines and his currently illustrating for the new Star Wars role-playing game from Wizards of the Coast. To see more of Joe's artwork, visit his official website at www.joecorroney.com.
You can also view online galleries of his published and unpublished Star Wars art at the following websites...
http://www.theforce.net
http://www.echostation.com
http://www.rebelpilots.com/
Contact Joe at jcorroney@earthlink.net

**Dan Davis** was born in Celina, Ohio on Sept. 18, 1957. A very short time later he was hooked on comics, both strips and books and decided to make it his career.
After a brief stint apprenticing for New York comic book artist Dan Adkins, he returned to Ohio to finish college and find a "real" job. But he kept sending samples to the large comic companies and freelancing on the side to the small ones.
Finally in 1990 DC comics liked his inks enough to send him a Flash Annual and soon he was in the comics business full time. Since then he has worked on many popular characters such as Superman, Superboy, Animaniacs, Flintstones/Jetsons, Scooby-Doo, Garfield, and Alley Oop. And recently he's added writing and penciling credits to his established inking credentials.
Currently he is busy inking the Star Spangled Kid comic book, Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E. at DC, and continues to freelance on various comics projects.
He lives in Celina, Ohio with his wife Lisa, and kids Alex and Hannah.

Comic books are a fun media and one of the few that anyone could create their own visions to share with others.
Blue Line Productions goals are aimed toward the enhancement of art through knowledge and quality art supplies.
No matter what it takes we make sure that the reader has the information that they are wanting.

One Year...

With the completion of this issue, we have completed our first full year of publishing Sketch Magazine.

I sincerely believe we accomplished our mission and have opened the eyes of fans and artists to the inside information of comic book production.

I was fortunate enough to get to travel to most of the major conventions and speak with many artists in the industry. I was happy to find out that they were learning something new with each issue, and were expanding their knowledge base of comic book industry. I can't count how many mothers and fathers that I've personally talked to, each expressing how much their child enjoys Sketch Magazine. I even got a chance to speak with some teachers who were using Sketch as a tool in their classrooms.
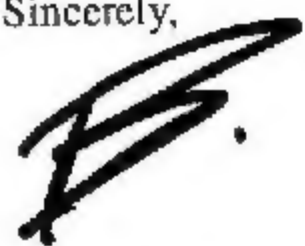
This past year has been one of the most satisfying years in a long time. I've gotten to work with some of the most talented and giving creators in our market: Beau Smith, Flint Henry, Dan Davis, Joe Corroney, Chris Riley and Tom Bierbaum to name a few. With the aid of these creators and others we were able to open our doors to the reader. This made it possible for us to pass along valuable and essential information that was acquired though years of experience to our dedicated following, making their experiences in this business even more enjoyable than that of our own. I ask that you support these creators that have taken their time to share their knowledge and thoughts.

So are we just cruising along now? Are we satisfied with our progress? NO WAY, we have just barely begun to break the ice on this industry. Within the first couple issues of next year we will be bringing on even more creative minds, and expanding into other arenas - yet even now, in this very issue, we display even more evidence of our progress, as we extend our page count by a full 8 pages!

I continually discuss with the Sketch staff how we can broaden the interviews and include more 'how-to's' into each issue, as well as a number of other topics. We want to continue the letters forum as an arena for creators to trade secrets and swap stories. Many creators who have contributed to Sketch in the past have asked me if they could continue to contribute? I have always said that the Sketch door is always open; I will always welcome them. We want to continue offering the most reliable, knowledgeable, and entertaining articles possible.

Before I wrap up, I'd like to thank the many subscribers who took a chance on an unknown publication. I hope you feel like you've gotten your dollars' worth. I would also like to acknowledge the storeowners for putting us on their shelves and telling their customers about Sketch. Lastly, I want to state my appreciation to all the creators who continue to support us with praise - and, equally important - criticism. Thank you, Sketch has grown because of all of you.

Sincerely,

Bob Hickey
bobh@bluelinepro.com

# BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS

## INTERVIEW
by Flint Henry

*"I think I'm in a frame, I'm going in there to look for the picture."*
-Jeff Bailey

Some of those to follow in Jeff Bailey's footsteps in *Out of the Past* might have the same feeling, particularly ironic if they walk the panels of Brian Michael Bendis' compelling comics noir world. Red-hot writing rave Bendis, working hard from out of



the oft-ignored world of the independent market, made his strong individual voice heard with the attention grabbing graphic crime novels *Jinx, Goldfish,* and *Torso.*

Classic crime novel and film iconography filled their pages in full-blown and updated fashion, carried along by Brian's rhythmic wordplay and film technique filled storytelling. You might not want to meet all of Brian's characters but you'll feel like you've known them for years as they step beyond the usual hoary comic book cliches, depicted with painstakingly constructed individual personality quirks and behavioral details.

From the striking, cleanly rectangular opening sequence of *Jinx,* Brian skillfully pulls the reader along with a variety of temporal and graphic hooks, especially effective when his characters deliver their 'Mametspeak' like dialogue that Brian is known for in sustained and persuasive sequences. Never one for needless or 'arty' exposition, Brian's dialogue continually moves the plot and propels the characters forward through their

dramatically-angled world of chiaroscuro and stark deep-focus panels that ink-echo John Alton and Nick Musuraca.

After honing his skills with his indie crime projects and others like *Fire* and the clever *Fortune and Glory,* he brought his particular stamp of noir drama and story construction to reestablish Todd McFarlane's *Sam and Twitch,* then crossing narrative genres to McFarlane's *Hellspawn* and high profile Marvel projects. His *Ultimate Spider Man* has proven to be a great hit, displaying a fun, logical, and exciting take on the classic mainstream character. Along with the talented Michael Avon Oeming, another Bendis sensation, *Powers,* is a hilarious and tension-filled cop tale where super hero implausibilities are made so convincingly commonplace that the violence is truly nerve rattling. Brian's depictions of mayhem and violence – visual mainstays of comics – are particularly effective in this age of over-the-top and commonplace comics chaos.

*Powers* is a winner, a great synthesis of Brian's independent
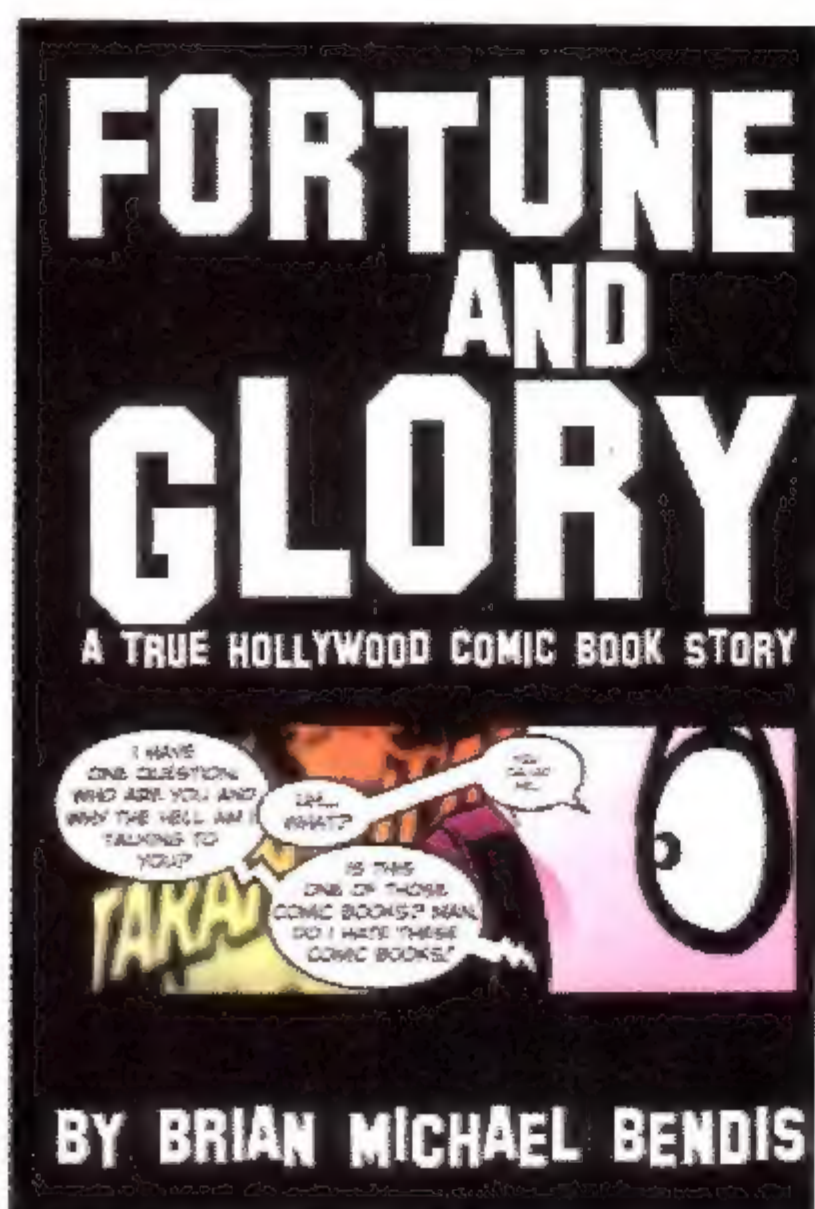
Artwork by Brian Michael Bendis and Michael Avon Oeming.

audacity and inspired mainstream sensibilities.

With Hollywood now holding one hand and his other firmly grasping the cuff of the comics field, Brian is a hot and highly in-demand writer/artist/ screenwriter/personality. Unlike a number of post-boom creators awash in false hype and fatuous narcissism, Brian is highly deserving of his critical acclaim and praise. With reams of skillful dialogue filling a number of hot, successful books, the Eisner Award winner is an articulate, witty, and prolific creator with a seriously amazing affinity for the comics medium. Whether you're web-slinging and swinging with Peter Parker, feeling your black-and-white self burn in the fast-emulsion film world of David Gold, or slo-mo cruising the neon-rinsed twilight with Detectives Pilgrim and Walker, you'll remember Brian's vivid and fully realized people and look forward to your next chance to be around them; his authentic humanist creative take making them as alive as a mix of human nature and a comic page possibly can.

In Bendis' frames, the human experience is broken into its millions of shapes, patterns, colors, and shards, where he arranges them with muted buzzsaw panache. If you look there for pictures, be prepared to stay within the frame. You'll be captivated.

*Sketch:* When did you begin writing, Brian? As a child, a teenager...?
**Brian Michael Bendis:** Yeah, yeah, as a kid, as a teenager... A very true, cute story... in school around sixth grade I had a creative writing assignment, and I adapted an X-Men story that involved Cyclops's brother where they go off in space. It was with Scott summer's brother... Do you know a lot about the X-Men?

*Sketch:* I don't remember...
**Brian Michael Bendis:** It was the Starjammers!

*Sketch:* Oh yes, with Ch'od, the big green guy, and the buccaneer type with all the aliens...
**Brian Michael Bendis:** Yeah, Starjammers - so I adapted this into a twenty –page prose story and handed it in, and I thought I had clearly stated that I had adapted this story and my teacher gave me an "A+" and called my Mom and said "What an imagination! And so many characters!" and on and on, and was just blown away by the level of creativity that was going on in my brain. And then I realized that she had no idea who the X-Men were or that I had adapted it, even though I thought I had made it clear that I'd done so.



And instead of fessing up I just let it go.

*Sketch:* (laughter) That's cool, very cute – and it's a happy Bendis story! Now you're a writer/artist, when did the drawing kind of thing set in?
**Brian Michael Bendis:** They both came in at kind of the same time, you know, you just start drawing...I was drawing and writing Marvel type comics and personal stories back in...I remember doing it in like 8th grade. There was some Punisher vs. Capt. America story that I had been working on from like sixth grade to eighth grade, and I must have drawn the thing like ten times. I still have the stuff

EISNER AWARD WINNER
**BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS**
**MICHAEL AVON OEMING**
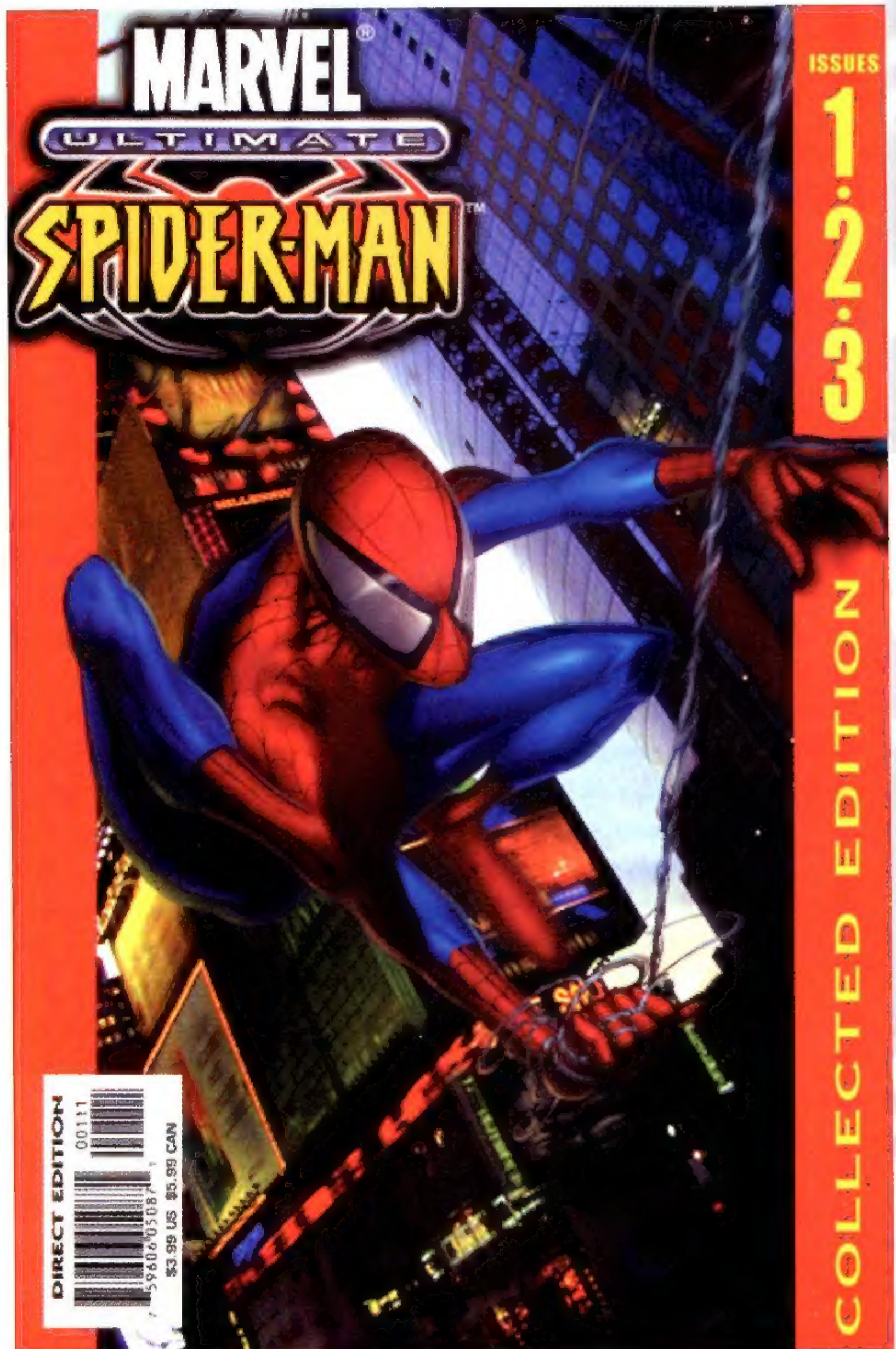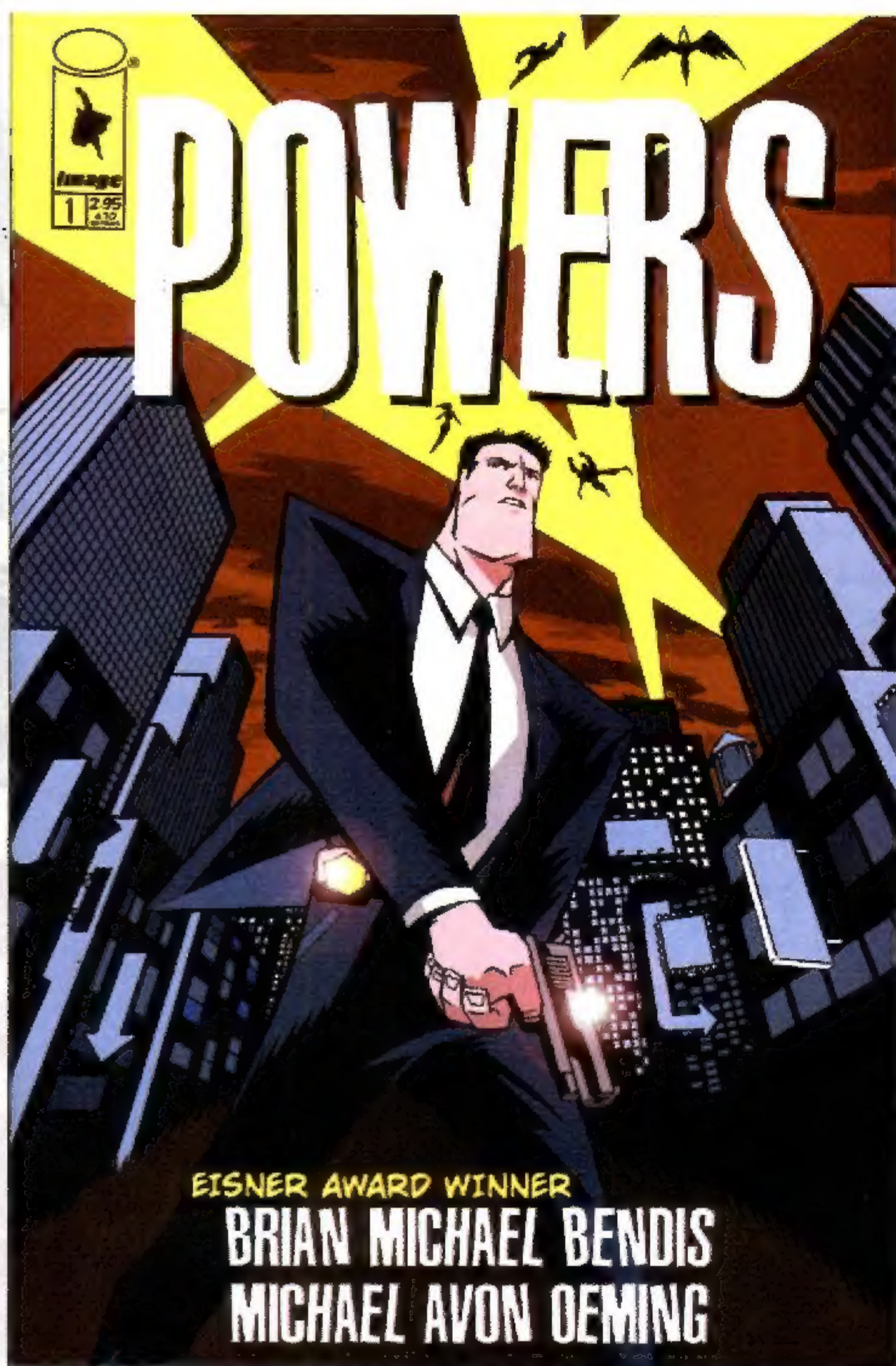
around and I'm sure it will end up in Marvel Team-Up.

*Sketch:* (laughter) I look forward to that one!

**Brian Michael Bendis:** A newer version of it, I've always been writing and drawing, I never said "Boy, I need to get someone's script", and draw from it, I was always sort of writing my own stories, even these cheesy silly ones. And then as you get older and you want to break into comics it just becomes a matter of "I have stories I sort of want to tell," and ...writing; I became so intrigued by it, and art was the thing I was training for, but I'd never really taken any writing classes or anything. They just of came together, and the writing got a lot better than the drawing very quickly.

There are some artists that can draw everything they want right away, natural artists, very organic – whatever's in their heads gets on the page - well, I'm not that guy, everything I draw is like a big effort. It's a very laborious process. But for writing, though I'm constantly picking, it doesn't seem so laborious, you know what I mean? It seems to come to me a little better. And as my career has gone the last couple of years it just seems that I'm more popular as a writer as well, so it's just the way it sort of goes. I love to draw. But writing is something I'm very challenged by, very intrigued by, and I just love doing

*Sketch:* And it obviously shows! Some of the stuff is just so great... I

was just looking at some pages in Powers # 7, and was struck by your use of dissolves...or time compression, or whatever...these are great, where you're just moving Ellis around the precinct house. How do you approach something like that – do you do it, or Mike (Oeming)? Or together?

**Brian Michael Bendis:** In Powers, if you see something that's an outlandishly complex double page spread, it's usually something that I threw at Mike... that annoys both Mike and Pat (Garrahy). I'm very intrigued by the double page spread as opposed to the single page. When I was a kid I remember looking over to the right side when the two pages were facing – I knew you were supposed to read them in sequence, but I was always looking to see what was happening on the right page while I was reading the left, so I figured the best way to control that was to use both pages at once. I knew it wasn't appropriate to try and absorb both at once, but I remember as a kid being very intrigued by it and wondering why there wasn't more use of the double page spread. I just like 'em. Sometimes it's come to bite me in the butt, because other people will love to read the one page and then the other page and then they'll realize all of a sudden, "Oh wait, this is a double page spread Brian's showing us here, and I've already read this left hand side," so it can backfire on you if people aren't as into it.

On Powers, Mike and I do them together. There's a lot of books where I lord over every panel, and the first three issues of Powers I was lording over layouts, but me and Mike are very much on the same page and I can describe something to him, and he'll know right off the bat what to do. Unless I have something so clear in my mind that I just have to show it to him, I try not to give him stick figures any more. And sometimes you give some things more interesting that what

you might do, everyone's got their little bag of tricks. You know, you're collaborating, it's not, "Hey, I know how to do everything myself – do as I say!"

There are some things I have such a clear idea about so I go "Here, just let me show you what's in my head – do you think that's a good idea?" And a lot of times, if you show it very passionately people go "Yeah, that sounds cool." But I was torturing Angel Medina on Sam & Twitch, I laid out every speck of that thing, and he was very happy to have it that way for a while because he just wanted to draw. But after around four issues he was like, "Is there gonna be a big space monkey, or a splash page?" because I was hitting him with like forty panels per page and stuff. I was going crazy on him.

*Sketch:* Very different, I guess, from his Marvel stuff and his Todd material where artists probably anticipate drawing cool monsters and giant snarling maggoty demon faces?
**Brian Michael Bendis:** I think that's also why people were challenged by Sam & Twitch, we never did that the entire time. People were waiting for the other shoe to drop and I was like "No, Todd wants a crime book. I want a crime book. It's gonna be a crime book, I swear…"And it's nice that people see that now.

*Sketch:*
I know you've moved along, I think you're probably going to get people from Ultimate Spider Man and your other Marvel material to check out the great stuff you did on Sam & Twitch that missed or passed on it the first time.
**Brian Michael Bendis:** We see a lot of that happening with the trades like Jinx and Goldfish, they're gone, they're sold out. It's nice for it to find an audience, considering it was such a struggle to put the stuff out initially.

*Sketch:* The trades are the way to go, especially with things like Goldfish. It's great to have it all in one package.
**Brian Michael Bendis:** The Powers trade would be great for the Sketch audience, it's filled with everything on the behind-the-scenes creation of the book, we wanted to show people what goes into making a book like this, or David Mack's Kabuki. Sometimes at cons people are surprised to find out that we make these things in our house, where we live, not at some printing house or firm or someplace, but our houses. I hope when people see that it kind of empowers them to go off and do theirs, if they want to make their own comic book…they can

do it in their homes! You know "Oh, if Bendis can make a comic book, and he does it from home – and he's an idiot, then I'm fine, then I can do mine." That's why we put it out. I love stuff like that, with all the extras and things, very in-depth, and it was nice to have the opportunity to do that with Powers. And I wanted to showcase Mike's stuff, show people what a real cartoonist can do and how he kicks butt!

*Sketch:* He's great, his gestures are so strong and confident, the stuff looks effortless for him.
**Brian Michael Bendis:** His sketches are just so powerful, and his



JINX

BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS

**MARVEL KNIGHTS**

**DAREDEVIL** ™

**#1**

WWW.MARVEL.COM

**BENDIS
HAYNES**

DIRECT EDITION

00111

7 59606 05046 8

$2.99 US  $4.50 CAN

---

lot of subliminal messages in the artwork, a lot of voodoo stuff to make you keep reading it, or make it seem like it takes you an even longer time to read it than it does, giving you more…but I won't go into that in this magazine.

*Sketch:* Don't give away too many secrets! You mentioned you didn't have a lot of formal training, did you take the McKee* course?

**Brian Michael Bendis:** Not yet, he doesn't come to Cleveland much, but I want to as soon as possible. I read the Robert McKee book after I'd written a great many things, and was very happy to find out that a lot of things I didn't have words for…that I couldn't put into words at the time, I sort of instinctually had picked up from years of filmgoing and reading, that even though I didn't understand formally what "structure" meant that my structure was intact. Sort of like learning how to play guitar without knowing how to read music. That was nice.

I had attended the Cleveland Institute of Art for five years, was trained in a bunch of subject matters that in no way applied to my everyday life and my chosen field as a comic book artist. But still it was nice to have some time to sit and draw; I needed the practice a great deal. But I don't recommend for someone who wants to get into an applied art field, like a commercial artist, solely going to a fine arts school. I found myself in an uphill battle ninety percent of the time just so I could apply the lesson they were teaching me to comic books. They just weren't interested in it, they didn't see comics as art, and it was a real battle. What's funny is that there were three kids at the Institute over the four or five years of courses who were comic book motivated, they really wanted to make it into comics – and

---

brushwork is like "Boom!", and it's there in two or three lines. So anyway, your original question was about being a writer/artist…well, sometimes you have a necessity, you want to put out a comic book, you might have to do things yourself. Same thing goes for lettering, inking, and production. It wasn't like I set out to letter comics, but I've lettered over fifty off them – poorly, but I've done it, because I wanted to get my book out. Sometimes you do it yourself, a one-man band.

*Sketch:* Production and technical prowess aside, your stuff just seems so genuinely heartfelt and involved, the

material would come over if it were printed on a wet cocktail napkin. You get swept into it – again, I love the trades because I have everything in one solid item, and I don't even have to pick something else up, just keep absorbed and keep turning pages. It's great, especially with some of your more complex stuff, like Torso… not something you just zip through.

**Brian Michael Bendis:** I feel a lot of obligation to the people that buy my stuff, I know comics are very expensive. I try and pack them full of entertainment, so I fill them with everything I can, right down to the letters column. I also fill them with a

---

all three of us made did, at Marvel and places, and we take great pleasure in that. So adversity does, indeed, make the heart grow stronger!

The art...I was training as a commercial artist, and taking graphic design...we didn't have any computers...hmm, it's hard to say exactly what we were doing all day, but we were doing something. I sure remember working. For writing, a lot of it was self-taught. You know, as many people do, I teach myself stuff that interests me, subjects that are of interest, and writing was one of them. When the McKee book came about a lot of people had recommended it to me, and it really blew me away. And another book On Directing Film, by David Mamet – I think it may be the greatest book on creating comics that's ever been made, Mamet talks about just the actor telling a story with pictures...lots of incredible stuff in that book that pertains to comics...things concerning the camera – put the camera down, don't make the camera a character...and so much more. That book means a lot to me, I actually end up giving it out as a gift to a lot of comics professionals. There are some other books, obviously Will Eisner's...but there isn't a lot of quality talk about making comics, that's one of the reasons I like Sketch. When I get to a con, sometimes beyond my very good friends whom I've grown up with in comics, you find a lot of people don't seem to like to talk about the craft of comic books. Instead of the art form sort of becoming more vibrant from discussion and debate, you sometimes have people who seem insecure about their own craft and don't want to share. Some comic book writers and artists seem to feel like they're sort of pulling a fast one, like they're full of it. I've heard of a big name comic writer responding to a book questionnaire concerning the 'how-to's' of comic writing responding in

words to the effect that "There is nothing I can teach. You either know how to write or you don't, and you shouldn't even be doing this book because there's nothing you can teach some one." What? That's disgusting! Can you imagine, in any other medium, that you would do something like that? "Let's not teach music, you either know how to play that instrument or you don't." That's ridiculous.

I'm always eager to share whatever I have read or whatever I've seen that made me think about the craft of comics, because I'd like that to kind of turn around, I'd like people to be more open about their own creative journeys. For instance, there's a movie out called Visions of Light, a documentary put out by the American Cinematographers Institute a few years ago by and for them, but it ended up turning out so well they released it theatrically. You can rent it at Blockbuster, it's cinematographers talking about the art of telling stories with light and images –it's the best movie about comic storytelling I've ever seen. They spend time on film noir, on color, on black and white...I saw it at a time I wasn't real learned about film noir, and it just blew my socks off – and here the guys that invented film noir, I went "Hallelujah!" I really think this is a great movie for a lot of visual artists and storytellers to look at. And it's very entertaining on it's own, it's not dry like an old A&E documentary or something.

*Sketch:* A great recommendation, and you've mentioned some others – without much formal writing training, was there something along these lines that caused you to consciously direct yourself towards the particular style you're associated with? Did it grow out of influences? Are you more instinctive, or did you sit down and say this is the way I'm going to
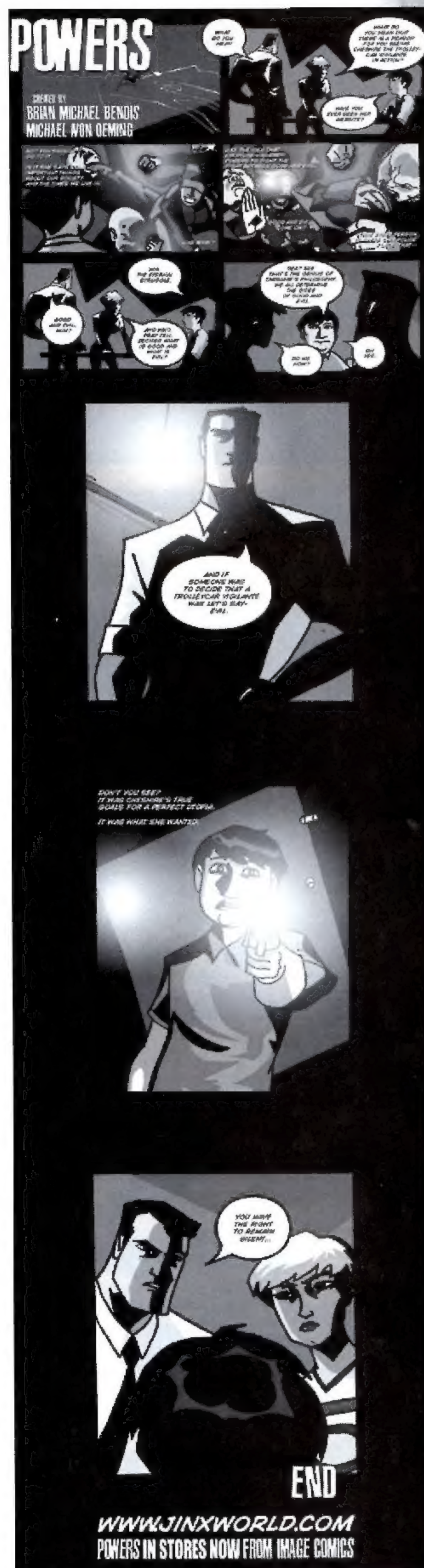


Powers #8 Internet Comic Strip
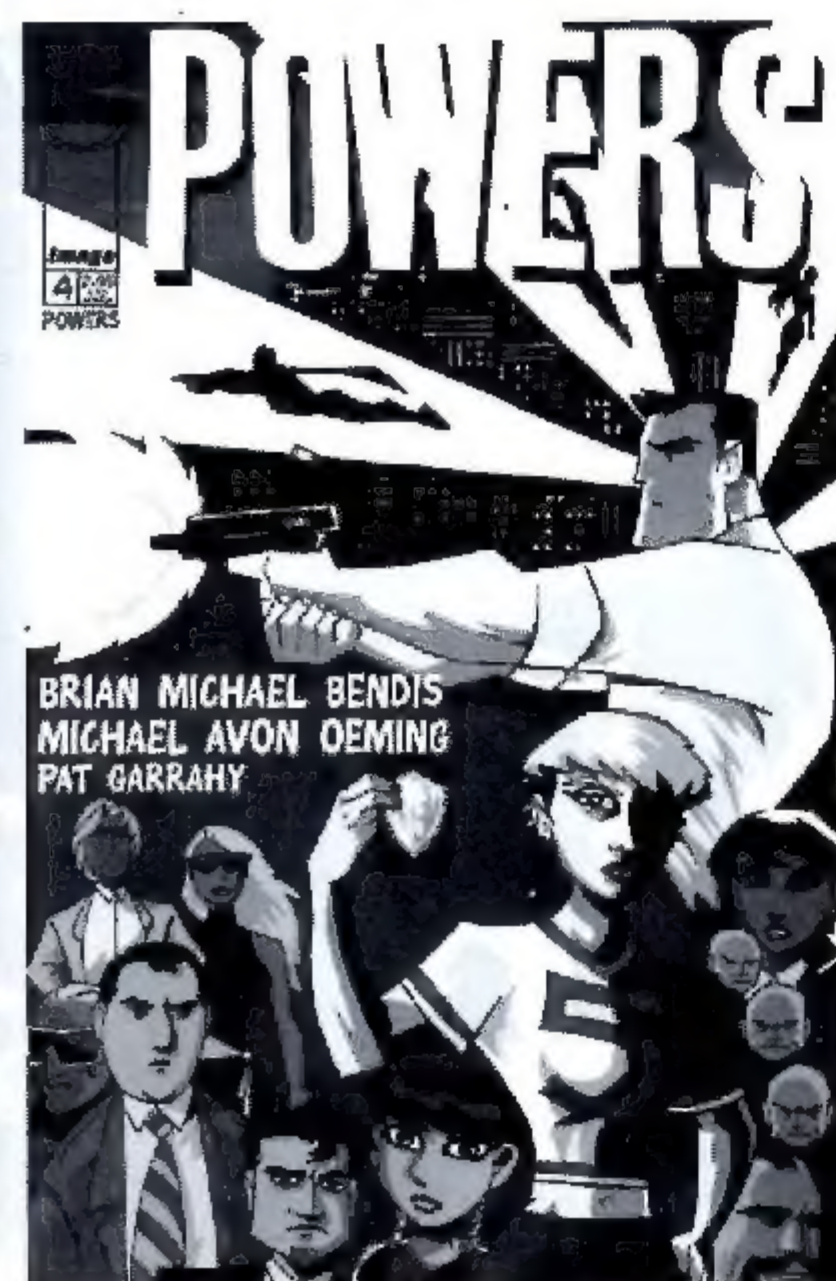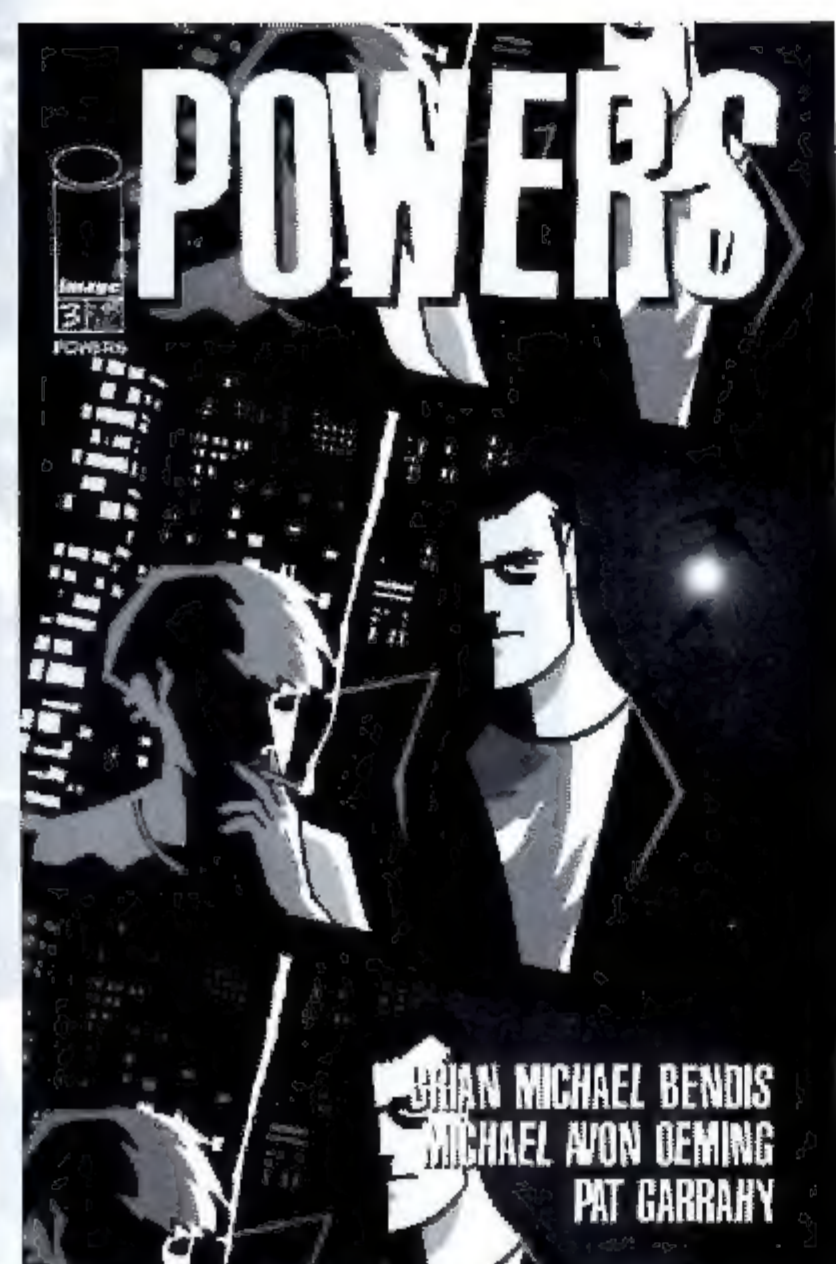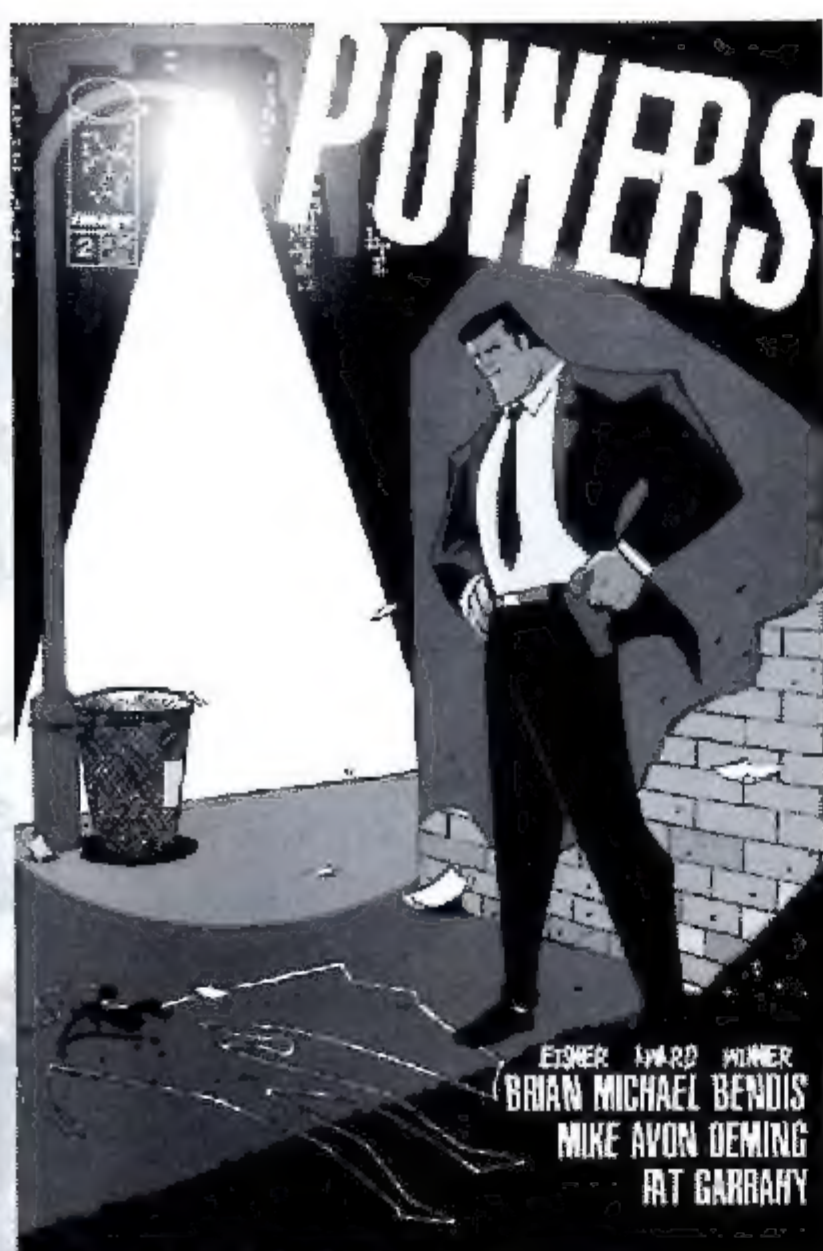
create?

**Brian Michael Bends:** I'm more instinctive. There are things I look at and think "That's going to be a rule for my life," you see interviews with people where they had it all worked out – they knew they were gonna get here and they knew they were going to do this and they knew they were going to do that, and I'm like "Yeah, how'd you know that? How exactly did you know that?" I have goals in my life that I want to achieve, things I want to do. One of the best things that's happened to me over the year is that people have been nice to me about my work, and it's work that I'm generally very proud of, and that's really very nice. I wanted to be known for a certain kind of thing and that's sort of what's coming out lately, and I'm really grateful for that, but if I had told you "This is how I'm gonna go about it" – I didn't know how I was going to go about it, I'm just "I'll do this work," and you take the opportunities that come your way, know what I mean? And a lot of the opportunities that have come my way lately I wouldn't have guessed in a million years.

Obviously, the thing I'll be most known for over the next few years will be Ultimate Spider Man, and if you'd told me five years ago, "Hey, by the way, not only are you gonna get a crack at Spider Man but you're gonna get to start it over again, see what you can do." And that people would be nice about it – come on! So when I see these interviews with people going "This was my big plan," I'd be lying through my teeth if I said I had this as my big plan. I mean, I'm shockingly grateful for all the opportunity, but I'm hanging on by the seat of my pants here, I have no idea how I got here. But there are rules that I sort of set for myself, almost like a religious rule in a way – someone who I admire might say something and I'm like "Well you know what, I'm going to do that too."

That I agree with fully." One of the things I say in many interviews is that comics is a bastard art form. Sting said that about rock and roll once, the reason he loves rock and roll as opposed to jazz or other music genres that he obviously has an affinity for is that rock is a bastard art form - it doesn't exist unto itself, it's a mixture of this kind of music and that kind of music, pulling in other genres and mixing it up. It's a bastard. And by mixing it you're saying things about your own personality, how you mix these other things, and from that you get something new and vibrant and exciting – no matter how you mix them it's gotta be something new, because you did it. If you just regurgitate it on itself, someone else's ideas, you're going to fail; you're going to fall on your face. But if you're always pulling something new, something else into it, you're destined to succeed. And that's the way I feel about comic books - that as long as you're looking outside of comic books for your inspiration, or you're pulling in ideas about screenwriting or about poetry or prose, then there's no way you can fail, creatively. A comic book isn't line art…it's not painting, it's not photography, it's not screenwriting or poetry or prose, none of these things makes a comic book. But anything that makes an image telling a story, in a sequence, that's a comic book. So there's no rules, right? So as long as you're not, like tracing Jim Lee…which is the way a lot of people make their comics, but there's no way you're going to be an interesting, successful artist if that's what you're going to do. The only way to be interesting and successful is to look outside of comics for your inspiration, and in there you will say, "Well, what do I have to say in the comic book medium? Well, this is what I have to say …And I want to take this and this, and do something interesting with it."
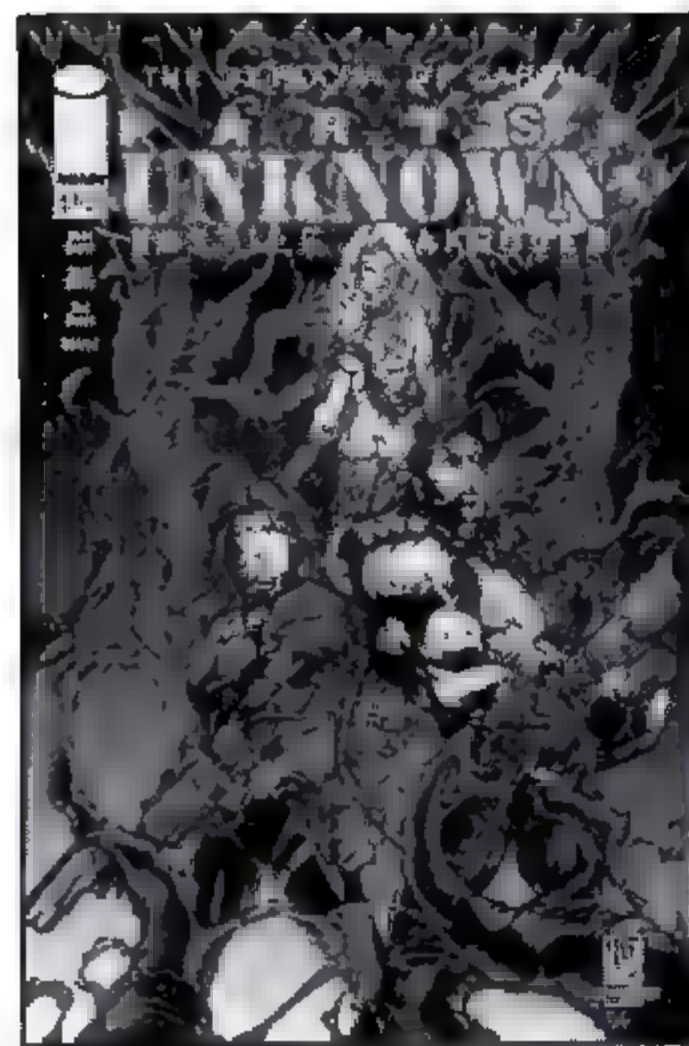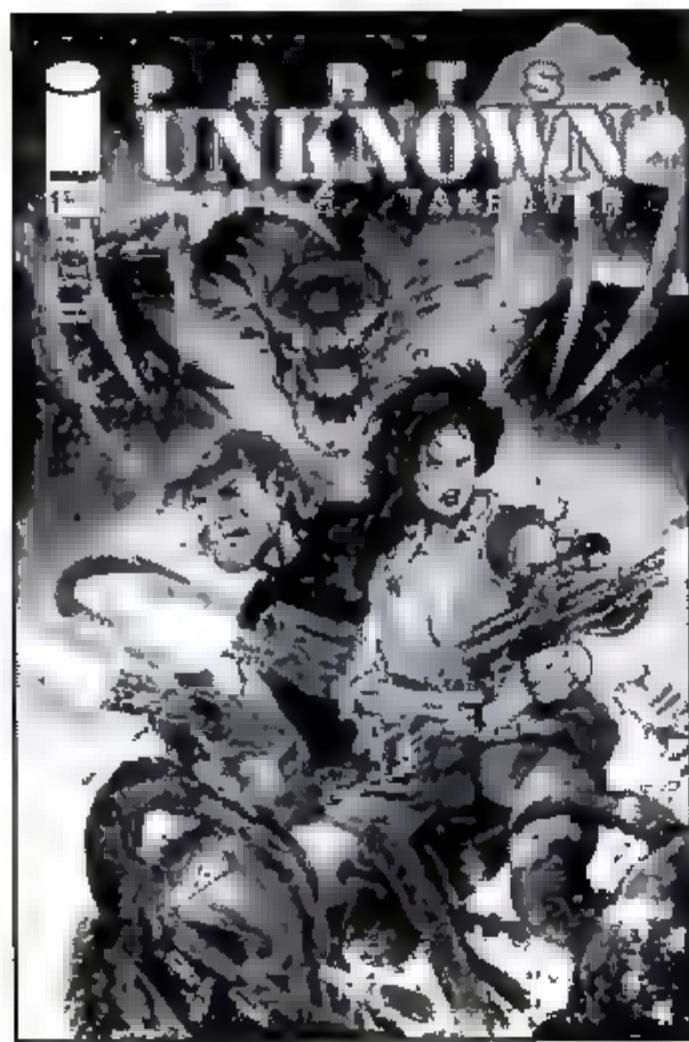
## From The Ranch
# Wearing a Cheap Suit and Still Looking Good.

By Beau Smith

When I broke into this business back in 1986 I worked for Eclipse Comics. At the time we were the number three publisher of comic books behind Marvel and DC Comics. Eclipse was very close, if not ahead, of the game in quality and innovative works. What we were behind on was finances. We did not have the deep pockets and 60% of the market that Marvel and DC had. When you are in that boat you learn to row the oars all by yourself.

At the time I thought that having to scrimp and recycle things was a burden. Now, many years later, I'm very thankful for those days of being a comic book bush pilot and flying by the seat of my pants. It gave me a chance to get down in the dirt and roll around where the real stuff happened. We didn't have a big fancy lead list, no Rolodex of Power with incredible contacts and no pool of assistants ready to do the grunt work. Nope. We did it the best way we could...

We did it ourselves.

That has proved to be a huge plus. I learned to get the most bang for the buck that way. How to cut corners without cutting quality. How to get attention without paying out the bottom end for high rate card advertising. How to get press without a large promotions staff. Just like fishing...it's all in the lure and presentation.

Let's say you're a small publisher, a creator with your own comic book, a writer, an artist, or just someone with a project you want to push. There are easy, low cost ways to make national attention happen for you.

Here's a little something that I did when I was writing *Beau LaDuke: The Dogs Of Danger* for Eclipse in the mid 80's. I needed people to know about this series. I wanted others to be able to enjoy this cast of characters that I had created in the image of me, my family and friends. I wanted the unwashed masses to get the same thrill that I did when I looked into the mirror and saw my own reflection.

Self love...a great piece of motivation.

First thing I did when the first issue was printed and out, I sent copies to all the local newspapers and TV news stations. Remember that daily news needs just that...daily news. You make their job a lot easier when you do their work for them. Newspapers need stuff to fill those local feature spots. Local TV has those Corn-Cobb-Report-Early-In-The-Morning shows that need local color. Even better...now there is the internet, and all of the internet news services that are begging for info on almost an hourly basis.

The local news loves a local color story. I wrote a separate press release for my local/state papers and TV stations. I made sure that I played up that I was a native of the area and still lived there. I went over the fact that I had other local people in the story, as well as some from the sights in the area. They all picked up on it, and my stuff was covered by all the local and state news.

Having that happen, it wasn't long before some of the stuff hit the Associated Press Wire. There's where the local stuff can pay off. Soon some very nice national newspapers called and ran stories on the book. The same with cable and national TV shows - some bigger than others. Granted, it's like my daddy used to say..."You throw enough crap on the wall and some of it is bound to stick." Now I'm not saying that my stuff or yours is crap, but I think you see the dance steps I'm makin'.

Once you get that attention you then turn it around to the direct market press (Wizard, Comic Buyer's Guide, Comic Shop News, etc.) You also make the news available to the distributor, - Diamond Comics. That way you get covered through the direct market retail system. Like a dung beetle, you just keep rollin' that PR and makin' it bigger and bigger. The size and stench of it will be too large to ignore.

Now.... what has all of that cost you? It's run you a small amount of postage, some paper and a few envelopes. Not much at all.

Let's say you want some news in a big time national magazine. You don't know whom to contact. You don't have that Rolodex of Power built up yet. Here's what you do. You go to your local newsstand or major bookstore (Barnes & Noble, Border's Books, Crown Books, etc.) You go to the magazine section and check out all the magazines on entertainment.

Publications like Entertainment Weekly, Maxim, Starlog, etc. Those all deal with almost every point of interest with the kind of things that are in most comic books. There are also business trade magazines like Daily Variety and Hollywood Reporter. Think about the kind of comic book that you have created or worked on. Look at the different magazines and see which ones relate best to your book. You can either buy the magazine or just copy the info from the inside of the magazine...your choice. Less cost if you just jot it down right there in the store.

You need to get the magazine's address mailing and email. Who to send the comic and press release to? The best bet is the managing editor. That is the person who deals out the assignments most of the time to the writers or assistant editors. With a magazine like Entertainment Weekly, you might also want to send a package to a certain writer that may be covering an article on the kind of book or subject that you have. This is also where you start to build your Rolodex of Power.

You can send these packages out regular first class mail, priority mail (that gets it there 2-3 days), or if you really want to make sure someone gets it, you can use Federal Express or UPS Overnight service. I suggest priority mail. Good price and gets there in pronto time.

Make your presentation package with care. Remember...this represents you and your book. You should be able to get nice folders and such at any office supply store. If you have a computer you will be able to make up your own stationary and envelopes. With the use of your computer you can also make up business cards as well.

What I'm trying to get at is that you can make this as cheap or as expensive as you like. Just make sure you don't do it on notebook paper or with big colored markers. When I was doing *Wynonna Earp* at Image Comics I sent out packages of the first three issues of *Wynonna Earp* to various magazines, newspapers and TV shows. I had pretty good luck. I got play in magazines such as Maxim, Hollywood Reporter, Video Business, Video Store Magazine, and all my local newspapers and TV news shows, as well as all the direct market magazines and distribution outlets. My total cost was next to nothing.

The secret is to use your imagination. There are many more ways to get attention and free publicity for your project. Think about all the different slants you can use on your book and how to make it attractive for someone dealing out the news. I cannot stress enough the power of the internet. A great place to push your product, and at little or no cost.

All of the crawling through the discount isle of promotions has helped me so much with my job for Image Comics and Todd McFarlane through the years. Some of our most successful marketing and promotions have come from very simple low cost plans that I came up with during my time with Eclipse Comics. Don't think that you're too small or don't have the deep pockets to make things happen for you. It can be done.

Most of it comes from your mind, and not being afraid to give it a shot. You have nothing to lose but a few stamps and a little time. The pay off can be huge.

Remember...It's a buy or die situation. Make sure you're on the right end of the gun barrel.

Stayin' one step ahead of the law,

Beau Smith

*Comic's Manliest Man, Brawlin' Beau Smith, burns his own trail through a variety of entertainment territories. His leather-tough tales and tips appear in every issue of Sketch, you miss them at your own risk. Learn how to set up your own rough-riding Rolodex of Power from Beau's article in Sketch # 4*



Artwork by Flint Henry

*The Universe at Your Finger Tips*

# Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books

by Tom Bierbaum

This time let's look at one of the most difficult "real world" aspects of making a living writing comics: getting along with editors.

Until you've established dynamite connections or amassed your own major following, the only way you're going to make a living as a comic book writer is to convince an editor to work with you and then keep him or her happy that they're working with you.

The best way to do that, of course, is to write great stories that sell a lot of comics. But even the most commercially successful writer in the world isn't going to hold onto many assignments if he can't get along with the people who do the hiring and the firing.

So here are a few pointers, first for getting an initial assignment from an editor, then for keeping that assignment.

### 1. Be respectful of an editor's time.

No editor will be able to give careful consideration to every aspiring pro out there. And there are a million well-qualified writers sitting around with not enough work to do, so an editor doesn't need to spend any of his precious time on unproven talent. You've got to make it extremely quick and easy for an editor to see what you can do and judge how good you are at doing it.

And don't get resentful and vindictive when you get little or no response from an editor. That's the average response the editor *has* to give to most aspiring pros because he doesn't have time to do it any other way. And if you become any sort of negative presence in his life, that editor is going to send you straight to the bottom of a deep, deep slush pile.

### 2. Make your initial submissions short, compelling and very much to the point.

Grab the editor in about the 5-10 seconds of his attention you're likely to get (if you're lucky). Be persuasive with sentences, not gigantic treatises, because initially, one and two sentences are all the attention span you have to work with.

### 3. Give the editor a reason to remember you.

Include nice artwork to your submission, sign it with a little cartoon, give some interesting piece of personal background that will stick in his mind. Don't go overboard, putting, say, your submission on neon yellow paper, or identifying yourself as "the world's biggest X-Fan." Don't come off as flaky or fan-boy-ish, but, rather, as creative and inspired.

### 4. Be politely, unobtrusively persistent.

Come back and come back as often as it takes, but come back in a way so that the editor is happy to see a friendly face, not wincing because it's so hard to get rid of you. Give the editor reasonable intervals between inquiries, at least a couple months if he hasn't shown any interest yet.

### 5. Listen.

If the editor gives you some advice, make sure it's obviously reflected in your next submission. If he asks you to approach him only in a certain way, honor that request. If he starts giving you glimpses into his taste and preferences, remember them and reflect them.

If he gives you some sort of personal information (his favorite sports team, type of restaurant, rock group) remember it and be willing to share those outside interests. Don't be afraid to act like a friend (and don't be put off if he's not looking for a friend) because a smart editor doesn't want to work with people he can't get along with.

### 6. Be flexible.

If your creative obsession isn't quite what the editor is looking for right now, be willing to do other kinds of stories — the editor's kinds of stories — as a way to get established so that maybe someday you *can* pursue your own creative obsession.

### 7. On the other hand, don't come across as a spineless hack, devoid of your own creative ideas.

Editors want to believe they're advancing the artform and working with people who've got real creative vision. Find the balance that allows you to accept and respect the editor's vision while bringing to it something of your own that's fresh and stimulating, something the editor wouldn't have in the mix if he weren't working with you.

### 8. Spread your bets around.

Be taking all these steps with as many editors as you can possibly approach. Don't give any one editor the feeling that you're desperately dependent on a break from him or her. Put yourself in a position to genuinely radiate the feeling that an editor who passes you over runs the risk of having a sharper editor out there snatch you up and get all the credit for a great discovery.

It's a tacky metaphor, but this is a lot like getting a date. Desperation is not attractive. Confidence is.

And now, let's shift gears a little. Let's assume all these brilliant suggestions have worked for you, and you've got yourself some work from an editor. What do you do to keep getting work from him or her?

### 1. All of the above.

Remember that the editor's life hasn't changed just because you now work for him. He's still frantically busy, he still wants to work with people he gets along with and he still wants somebody who has lots of his own great ideas. So keep on respecting his time, listening, being flexible, etc.

### 2. Learn to disagree civilly.

Now the compromises will come a little tougher because you're now working on an actual assignment, putting your very best effort into the story, falling in love with it, and then having to watch the editor make a zillion changes that mar your masterpiece.

You're going to probably hate almost every one of the changes. But don't fire back at the editor immediately. Think

about the changes. Figure out why they were necessary from the editor's perspective. Take a little time to get used to them.

In some cases, you'll find yourself liking them after a while. In some cases, you'll discover you can live with them, even if you don't like them much. In some cases, you'll even realize the editor has come up with a big improvement and saved you from doing something that really doesn't work. But in most cases, unfortunately, you'll probably never really like or accept the changes. The important thing then is to realize you can't fight to the death over every minor adjustment you don't like. Which leads us to...

### 3. Pick your battles carefully.

Don't burn up your good will on little skirmishes of no consequence. Don't take stands "on principle" over trivial matters. Only disagree stubbornly over things that really make a difference.

I can remember getting into a heated disagreement with an editor because he changed the oath we had certain aliens swearing by. It was probably silly and arbitrary on the editor's part to make the change, but it was also a dumb move on my part to fight it, because it was the tiniest detail possible. I'd have been smarter to save the confrontation for something that really mattered.

And if the editor's in a position to hire or fire you, recognize that he's going to win all of these fights anyway, unless and until you convince him to see it your way. So make your case a darn convincing one, and if you can't, learn to move on.

### 4. Find ways to avoid any battles at all.

If the editor has changed something and you find the change unacceptable, come up with an alternate version that addresses his concern and keeps you happy. And do it quick, because odds are, the comic is already behind schedule (believe me, they always are) so there's no time to obsess over a point of disagreement.

### 5. Be sensitive to the political realities of your editor's position.

He can't afford to get in trouble with his bosses, other editors, other companies or other creators over something you're doing in your stories.

Some creators like to sneak little jabs

at industry figures into their scripts or artwork, and that can create real trouble for an editor. We managed inadvertently to do something like that a few times ourselves, unaware of certain sensitivities and points of contention. But believe me, once we became aware of the problems, we worked as hard as we could to avoid ever stepping on those landmines again.

The comic book industry is anything but one, big, happy family. It's, in fact, more rancorous than the "real world" because there's so much emotional attachment to "creative visions" about what the business ought to be. Don't add to those problems by insisting that your "creative vision" be catered to, especially in cases where it puts your poor editor at odds with powerful industry forces trying to impose their "creative vision" on him.

Establish yourself and earn the right through your performance to choose your creative vision for yourself. And until you reach that point, realize how much trouble you can make for yourself and your editor by picking fights with those who've already earned such a position.

### 6. Don't make trouble within the creative team.

Your editor can have the same kinds of industry problems discussed above with your creative partners (pencillers, inkers, letterers, colorists). Don't pick fights with them and put your editor in the middle. And don't gang up together with them and fight your editor. Be part of what makes the team work well, not part of what puts it into conflict.

Some editors don't even want members of their creative teams to communicate with each other. That's pretty silly, but if you find yourself in that position, either honor the editor's desire or be very discreet in your contact with teammates. Such an editor may feel insecure, out of control and/or easily threatened, and you don't want to make a bad situation worse by appearing to scheme against him

### 7. Don't be the shy one.

This is probably the toughest part for me and the biggest reason why we don't get much comic-book work anymore. We hate being the ones to call up and initiate contact with an editor. We know editors are extremely busy, and we know that every call could bring bad news or criticism of our work. If you're shy by

nature, it's a tough call to make.

But editors can be pretty shy themselves. Some of them are as intimidated about calling you as you are about calling them. Others are just so busy, it's hard to ever get around to all the calls they're supposed to make. And if you don't take the initiative and give them that periodic call, staying in touch and maintaining the relationship, you could become an afterthought. It could get very attractive to an editor to replace you with a writer of comparable talent who's more sociable and doesn't require special effort to contact.

Obviously, living near the company and being able to see the editor face to face on a regular basis is a huge advantage, one we've never had freelancing from far-away California and western Pennsylvania.

One of the toughest situations occurs when you're on an assignment and they switch editors on you. Suddenly you're working for somebody who didn't pick you and may not particularly like your work. We've had times when that's worked out great and times when it's been very difficult, but as a writer trying to support yourself, it becomes your job to make the best of it.

It's kind of like getting a new stepparent, except in this case, the stepparent can fire you. What you've got to do is recognize that you're beginning from scratch. You pretty much have to go back to the top of this column and start doing those same things you did back when you were trying to make an initial sale, because this new editor may be no more sold on you than if you were some neophyte approaching him at a convention trying to get a start in the business.

It doesn't seem fair, of course, but fair doesn't enter into it when you're trying to support yourself in a tiny, shrinking business that has a hundred people waiting in line to grab any job that ever opens up.

Make it your assignment to be the editor's first choice to fill one of those rare positions when they do open up, and you'll have a chance.

Tom

Tombierbaum@bluelinepro.com
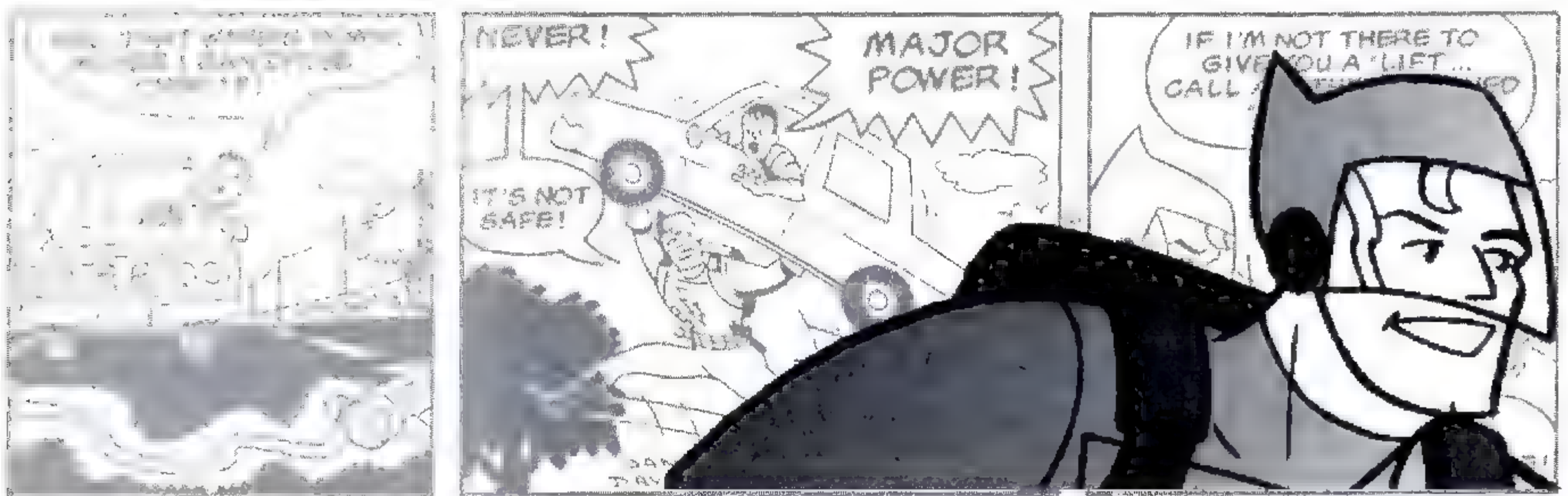
*Using Your Comics Skills to get into the "Real World"!*

# COMICS IN ADVERTISING

by Dan Davis

Remember the Charles Atlas cartoon ad "Make a Man Out of Mac"? The comic strip about a bully kicking sand in the face of a skinny guy at the beach, who then takes Charles Atlas' course and returns to win Round 2 made a "man out of Mac", and a millionaire out of Charles Atlas. Using your comics skills in the world of advertising and business can be profitable for you, too!

So you've submitted your comic strip "Slappy McDougall" to all the syndicates and you're waiting for the rejection slips to pour in. Or maybe you've sent sample comic book pages featuring Superman vs. Predator vs. Aliens vs. Bat-Mite out to the big companies and don't know what to do until they call? You might consider taking a look around your local area to see if there are some other places to market your skills. Despite lackluster recent sales in the comic book market, people still LOVE comics! And so do many businesses when it comes to advertising.

With copy shops evolving, many now offer unlimited items to put a business logo or cartoon on. It's called "merchandising," and it's becoming possible for even the smallest businesses to offer their image on a wide variety of products from coffee cups to t-shirts and beyond. With computers making print shop programs easier and more available, small businesses print their own flyers, brochures, and handbooks, and need art to fit their custom needs. Instructional and safety booklets often use the cartoon approach and can also generate a lot of work for the freelance artist. Of course you can get on the internet and look for all sorts of markets that might use comic artwork as well, but I'll concentrate on the local opportunities.

"No way, man! I'm an 'artist'! That's selling out!" You bet it is! Hopefully to the highest bidder! You do use money don't you? Local businesses, newspapers, and copy/print shops can evolve into a steady source of good income while you're waiting to become the next big thing in comics. And the good news is many of them are eager to get away from their static clip art files and computer programs, and get some custom original art that will fit their needs.

That's the key– "fit their needs". You may have to do some adapting away from the comic book world to get into the more general needs of businesses and the public.

For one thing you might need to pull back a little on the extremes of some comics pertaining to sex and violence. A barbarian cartoon character could swing his sword to "Slash Prices!", but you'd need to leave out the blood splashing through the air, and put a few more stitches of clothes on that harem girl in the background! Advertisers don't want anything controversial that will distract from what they're selling, and they usually have to please an audience of all ages. Fortunately audiences are hipper than ever, so don't worry too much about having to get overly "cutesy". You can still have a lot of fun creating comics and characters that will help businesses sell their wares.

## GETTING THE JOB

I had a lot of fun with the Major Power illustration I did for a local utility company. This job was a direct result of a local newspaper article interviewing me about being a comic book creator. If you've already worked on some comic jobs you might approach your local paper for such an interview. Even if you're a comics artist wannabe, or simply have a large collection of comics, the newspapers might be interested in a human-interest article on you, and thereby give you a forum to let people know you're a freelance artist for hire.

Anyway, when the power company saw the article, they called me and suggested I create a superhero for their advertising and I jumped at the chance. I got lucky in the sense that they came to me, but you could initiate the contact by producing your own flyer with a variety of spot illustrations, name, and contact info, and pass it around to businesses and copy shops. Try putting it in as an ad in the newspaper. Many areas have a number of community or business newspapers that have lower ad rates, but get a wide local distribution. You might also check out local websites to post your ad, or if you're really with it, link it up to your own website that promotes your freelance art.

While you might be used to wearing your Danger Girl T-shirt to conventions to show your comic art portfolio to editors, you might want to rethink your wardrobe when you go out to meet a business client. You don't have to do the suit and tie thing,

but stay away from beer logos on your t-shirts, capice?

I met with the utility company representative and we kicked around a couple of ideas. He even suggested a name, "Captain Power", but after searching the net we found that one had already been used. I suggested Major Power, which I ended up liking better anyway because of the double meaning. Comic book publishers have a defined product they want and a routine of reviewing sample pages and hiring based on those samples. It's a rather unorthodox and informal process of getting work. In the "real world" of business and advertising you will find people are a bit more formal, but also like to have fun, and if you're lucky they'll be open to creative ideas as well. We discussed how Major Power could be put onto a variety of things: from ads, to T-shirts, to restaurant placemats, and also things like safety coloring books, or comic strip style safety ads that could run in a number of publications.

We decided to do a full color drawing to kick things off with and introduce the character, and then move on to a series of comic strip ads that would appear over time. I then worked up a price quote; based on how long it would take to produce the drawings, and when that was approved went home to create.

A note about prices: I base my freelance work on similar jobs I've done, how long I'll spend on it, and "what people will pay", or what the going rate is. You can sometimes check your fee by dividing it by the number of hours you're working. Is it more money than a heart specialist earns? You may want to lower it a little. Is it half of minimum wage? Bump it up a little. A good idea is to come up with a quote "range" and see if the client is happy with it. If they laugh you out of their office, try again. Don't be afraid to negotiate, but stick to your word once you and your client agree. And ALWAYS talk money FIRST! Don't "expect" to be fairly compensated, "know" that you will be, by speaking up and agreeing on a figure. Putting it down in writing is never a bad idea.

If the project is detailed it may be wise to get approvals at each stage of the artwork, so you don't turn in a "masterpiece" that took a week, but disappoints your client because the character is "facing the wrong way", or some other simple complaint that could have been easily corrected early on. Most people just don't "get it" that you cannot simply rotate the drawing around to a different angle, and don't understand the time or steps involved in producing finished art. Your best bet for more work is a happy client who will recommend you to others.

Your client will expect you to come up with some sort of bill or invoice, unlike comic publishers that send you a "voucher" to fill out for getting paid. Find a simple invoice from somebody and duplicate the essential details on a blank piece of paper, with your own name and address in place of the original bill. Put in a brief description of the work you did, the fee you charge, and the date you want to be paid. For freelance art I usually say "due upon receipt" and expect that the company will process the invoice in 10 to 30 days. Again, try to find out ahead of time so there are no unpleasant surprises later.

## CREATING MAJOR POWER

Now the fun part...creating Major Power. I wanted a clean looking superhero, and knew going in that I should use a minimal style with bold lines, since a lot of little detail doesn't always reproduce or reduce well in newspapers or whatever product they might stick the Major on. So thinking in kind of the Batman Animated style, I started by doing a few gesture drawings. I draw these real small, just a couple of inches high. It helps me keep my proportions correct and it's easy to make changes so I get the arms and legs in the poses I want.

I was thinking a good energetic running pose would emphasize that he had plenty of power to go on. (Example 1). After deciding on a pose, I usually further define the drawing by lightboxing it and drawing it again (sometimes again and again!). I would rather redraw the whole figure on a new sheet of paper, than keep erasing and using the same paper, but it's up to the individual. When I lightbox it I also



STEP 1
GESTURE
DRAWING

*Example 1*



STEP 2
TIGHTEN
DETAIL
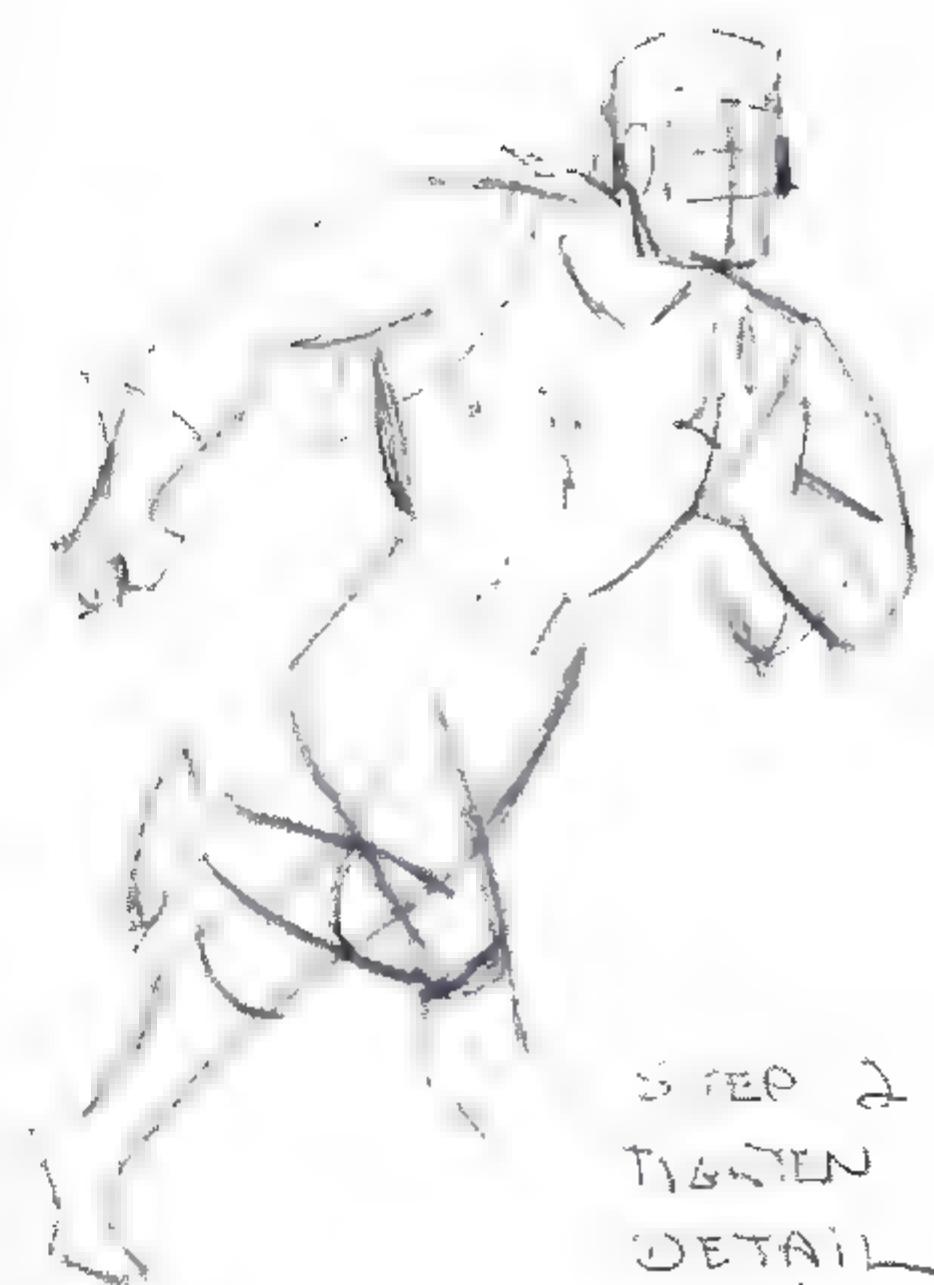
*Example 2*

Artwork by Dan Davis

sometimes flop the drawing over, because it can spotlight mistakes when you look at it from the opposite side. I'm still drawing small for now until I get it pretty much the way I want it. (Example 2). Next I blow it up on the copier to the size I want the original art to be, and add all the detail I want in the finished drawing. Here I put in the finished details like his Utility belt (Batman got the idea from him) with common tools for props, a lightning bolt for electricity, and visor and gloves (safety first!). The backpack I threw in so I could pull out other props later as the situation might arise, and the look was complete. We had discussed a utility person actually visiting schools dressed as Major Power and giving safety talks, so I tried to not have anything too outlandish about the costume.

At this point I'm usually working on good illustration paper that I will be inking on  Then I ink the drawing using a number 2 Windsor Newton brush, and either a good black marker or a Hunt 102 pen for some of the small detail, circles, and long straight lines, if any. (Example 3). I saved the art as black and white and made the power company some good copies they could use. Then I scanned the art into the computer and used Corel Photopaint (similar to Adobe Photoshop) to color it.

Not to get too far into digital coloring (since I couldn't if I wanted to!), but I selected a paint tool, and adjusted the setting for "if darker than" (which allows you to color the drawing without covering up the black lines). This is a terrific way to try out different costume colors without a lot of work. If you don't like a color, just click undo and try another. Basic blue was the winner, and I sent the power

company a finished color piece by email. I also emailed the local copy center a jpeg that I had them print straight to their Canon color copier for a better hard copy than my little color printer would get, and supplied the power company with some of these as well. (Example 4).

What an age we live in. This drawing eventually appeared on the front page of the newspaper - in color, with an article about the power company's new promotional character. More free advertising for me!

Major Power has now appeared in all the local papers, on T-shirts, banners, and place mats, and has garnered me another local client as well. In addition I'm still doing comic strip ads like the one included here (example 5.), and we may yet get to that coloring book, so it still continues to generate income for me. Incidentally, for the comic strip I used the Blue Line Pro comic font (shameless plug) for the lettering, and printed it out on Avery Ink Jet labels with an adhesive back, and it worked great.

So where do you start? As I mentioned earlier you could make up your own flyer and get the word out by visiting the places that might use your comic style artwork. A "Moon Man" alien could advertise somebody's "Moonlight Madness Sale!" A friendly styled Frankenstein creature might advertise a "Monster Blowout!" A Flash Gordon type hero could herald prices that are "Out of this World!" You might even come up with ideas that aren't corny like mine and get paid to draw cartoons and comics, and that's the idea, isn't it?
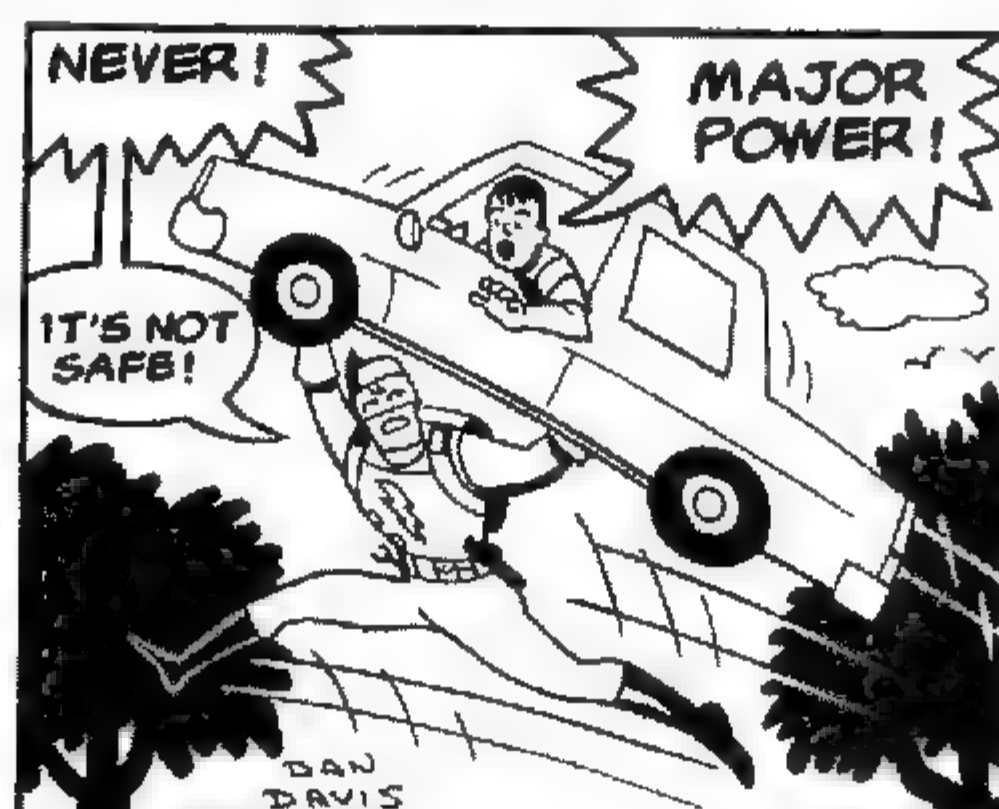
Dan can be reached
dandavis@bluelinepro.com



Example 3



Example 4 greys


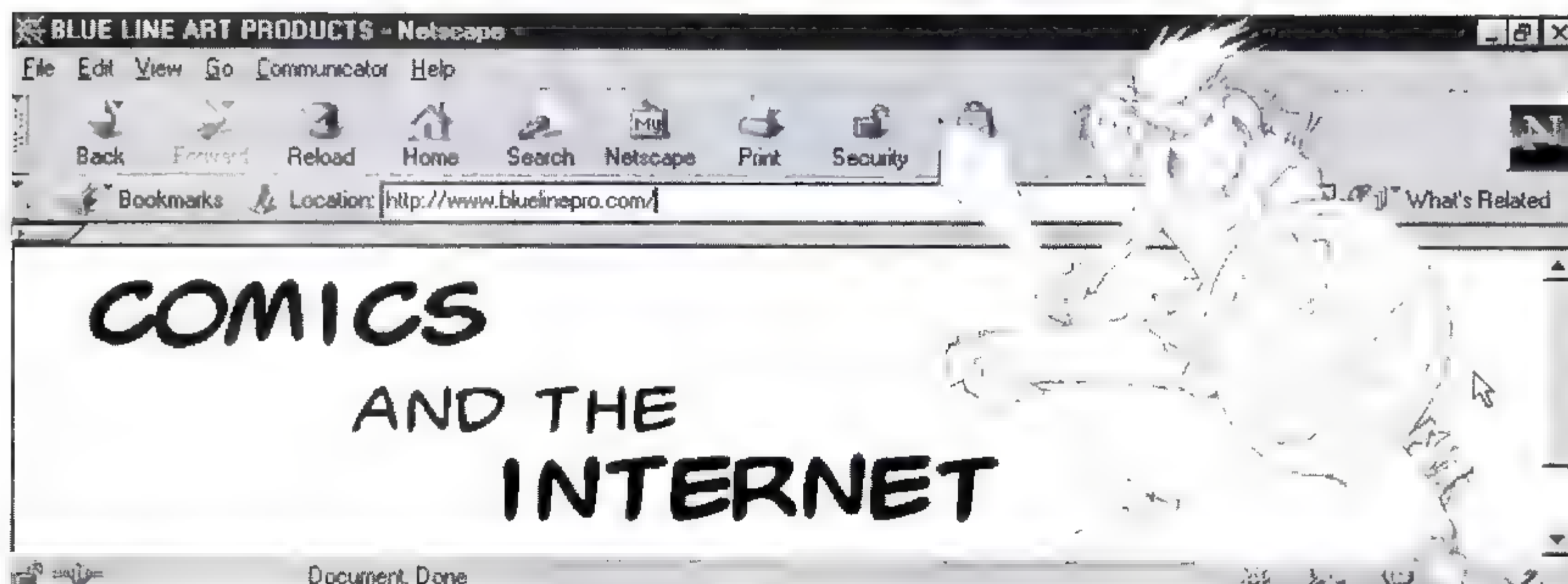
Example 5

Artwork by Dan Davis

# Blue Line Pro COMICS

BLOOD & ROSES: TIMELORDS - PARTS UNKNOWN
VAPOR LOCH - STORMQUEST - WARLACE - HELLGIRL
ASHLEY DUST - DEADKID - BOONDOGGLE - RONNA

# COMICS AND THE INTERNET

Document Done

by Mike Maydak

## E-Comic Books  - Part 1

Remember back in the day when candy ran you a penny and a comic book only cost a dime? Back then, the line between good guys and bad guys was clearly drawn in black and white and the women were always decent, God-fearing souls who never showed any cleavage. Yep, those were the golden days of comics. It feels like it was just last week.

Well, maybe for some of you old timers, but not me. Heck, I can't even remember yesterday, let alone last week. My recollection of comics has always been heroes and villains covered with grays. Oh, and the cleavage. I couldn't fathom a comic today without some hot chick ready to bust out of her skin-tight jump suit. My point is that as with most things, comics have changed with the times. Just when you think an unchangeable standard has been set, the next best thing comes along. When the next best things come rolling into town, sometimes you have to be ready to pack up and hop on. You don't want to be stranded at a ghost town with the last train chugging away.

But what is this next best thing? Is it sliced bread? No, that's been around for while (well, at least since lunch). Is it a new issue of *Battle Chasers*? Nope, that's just a childhood myth. Maybe it could be



www.astoundingspacethrills.com

e-commerce? Hmmm, I think we are on to something. Recent trends should have a steady movement of non-internet businesses breaking into the worldwide web. Comics is just one of the many to follow these recent footsteps. New breeds of comics are beginning to appear on the .com horizon in the past few years. E-comics, the next step in comic evolution, are bound to make an impact on the fanboy world as we now know it.

If you can find a comic fan blurting out, "E-comics? (Spit!) What in hog's heaven y'all talking about?" then two things are probably true about that person. First, they're probably a country boy/redneck. Second, they must spend all their web surfing time, if any, clicking on sites their mother would be ashamed of. You see, that's what *I* said before I took a look-see around the net. (Yes, sadly those statements hold true. Gee, I hope Mom doesn't read this.). Anyway, what I'm saying is that e-comics have gained some notoriety among the loyal comic fans out there, but are pretty much a mystery to the general weekend warrior comic fan. Everyday though, someone new is logging on and taking a look into what e-comics can offer, making this market one destined to grow. With the already high price of printing fees and improved graphic software, e-comics are nearing the time for some major growth spurts.

The definition for online comics is a very broad one. Currently, the e-comic industry ranges from the simple one-panel comic to borderline animation. Seemingly everybody from all levels of the comics industry are getting involved with e-comics, from Stan Lee to the backwater bayou illustrator. This level of variety has lead to some awesome creativity on the



www.buzzboy.com

web.

The most common e-comic found on the web is the standard one panel comic format. Many times this is linked to an insert window. This window pops up when the comic is accessed, allowing you to view the panel. A navigational menu allows you to select 'previous', 'next page', and so on. They are fun, easy reading. One of my big complaints about these types of e-comics is the tendency of the picture to be posted at a small size. Without many zoom options on most browsers, this makes deciphering the comic a chore. Unless you have a jumbo size monitor, you're gonna need to squint your eyes a bit. But heck, I can't complain a whole lot. Most of these comics only cost the time to find them. There are several good examples of this format, such as Buzz Boy, The Crater Kid, and Astounding Space Thrills.

Computer graphics are also making an impact in online comics. For years, digital coloring has lead the way to new standards for the industry. With e-comics and the capability to apply digital effects, the options available to a creator have

dramatically increased. With the use of mouse interfacing, a graphic display can be triggered that makes space ships zoom past and characters move. This interaction with the comic only heightens the reading experience (for an example, check out www.zark.com).

The next evolutionary step for online comics comes in the form of web-episodes. This borderline animation has become another popular format to promote one's character on the internet. With use of the Macromedia Flashplayer and similar software, many online comics support web-episodes of their character. They are very entertaining, to say the least. The site www.stanlee.net has some awesome examples on web-episodes. This site is worth checking out. Episodes for characters like Drifter and Accuser will keep you occupied all day. A word to the wise; stay away from the Backstreet Project. You will be forever addicted those memory games, constantly trying to find matches of your favorite Backstreet Boy. (Oh, Nick - he is soooo cute!)

But do web-episode animations fall within the realm of comics? From my view they could be considered choppy animation, or a comic with stiff digital movements. This raises the question of where the comic book ends and animation begins; both have essential elements that are similar. I believe the main, deciding difference between these two techniques is that comics show the most of what happens with the least amount, while animation presents the scene as a whole, depicting everything that is occurring in cell by cell motion. It is an art in comics to communicate to the reader what is transpiring between the panels, a consideration somewhat superfluous in animation due to its function. In animation, the whole scene can be shown in its unabridged form, while the comic art has to be more selective in the scenes and depictions it presents to get across its story. The way the lettering, perspective, and panels are depicted gives the reader the gut feeling of the scene's mood. Don't

get me wrong, animation requires a talent all its own, but, many comic book techniques (such as storyboards) are used in the first stages of animations. I cannot begin to think of all the work put into an animated scene. There is an obvious difference between the two art forms in their final state, they both require skills all their own.

What does the future hold for this market? With new computer equipment and software, the speed of our world increases dramatically everyday - so will e-comics. Imagine downloading a comic off the Internet and having the option to have a narrator read you the book. The narrative would guide you though the book, panel by panel, supplying you with its own theme music and sound effects. It may even get to the point where printed comics totally become a thing of the past. You would just download the titles you wanted off the net every week, instead of having to go to the store on 'new book' day.

I don't think the transition to e-comics will happen other night, but I see it as something that will eventually come to be. I know there are plenty of you out there who think I might be wrong, but consider this: Ten years ago I never heard of the Internet - think how much everyday things have changed in a mere decade. If someone had told me about the way the internet would change my life ten years ago, I would have called him or her crazy. I guess only time will tell.

This raises a big question mark above many comic creators' heads. " If everybody gets their comics off the web, then how do I make my bread and butter?" With the current state of e-comics being extremely fan friendly (read: free), many creators are asking themselves how e-comics will work. These are some of the questions we'll try to answer in part 2 of our look at e-comics, look for this installment in the next issue of Sketch.

For now, here's a list of sites you might want to check out. Some of these sites hold excellent examples of e-comics. They could possibly give you some ideas for what you want to accomplish with your own book.
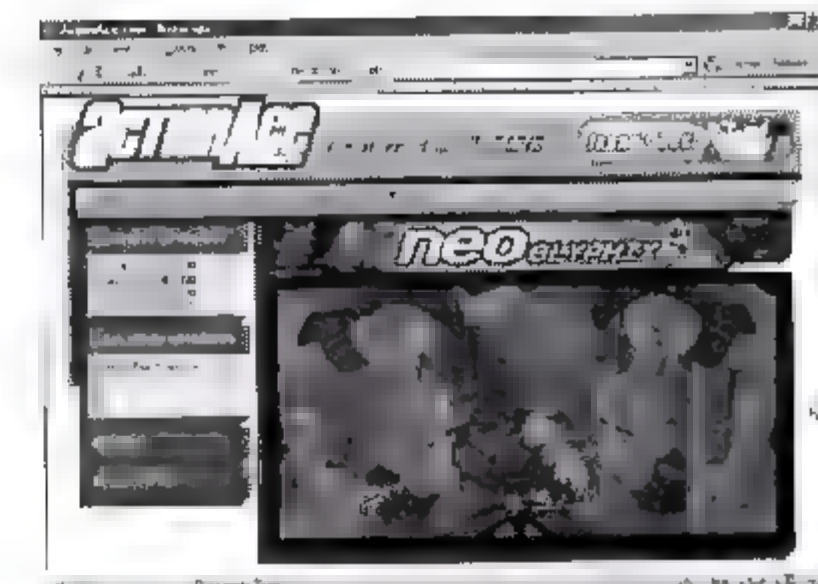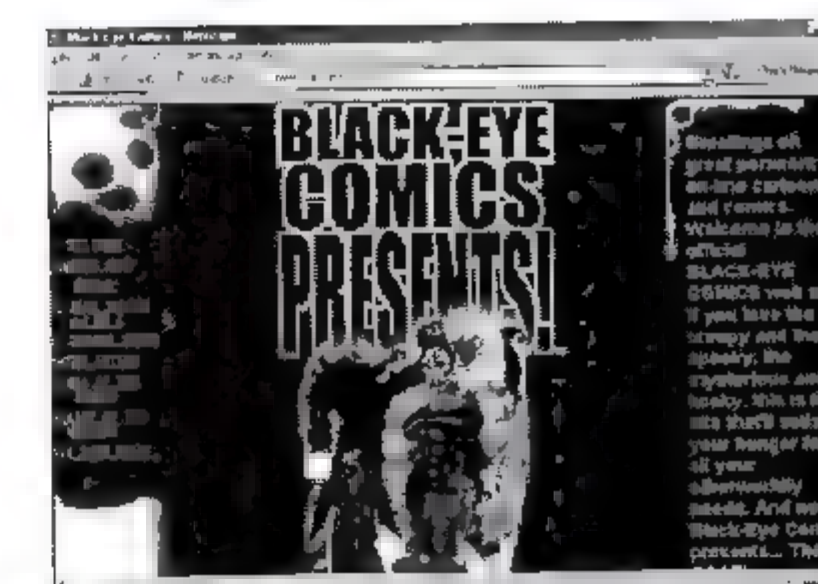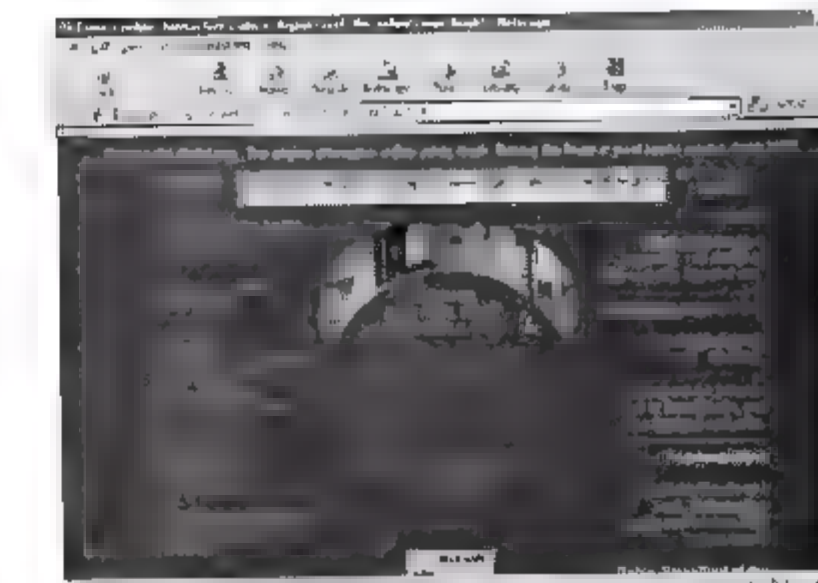
M²
m2@bluelinepro.com
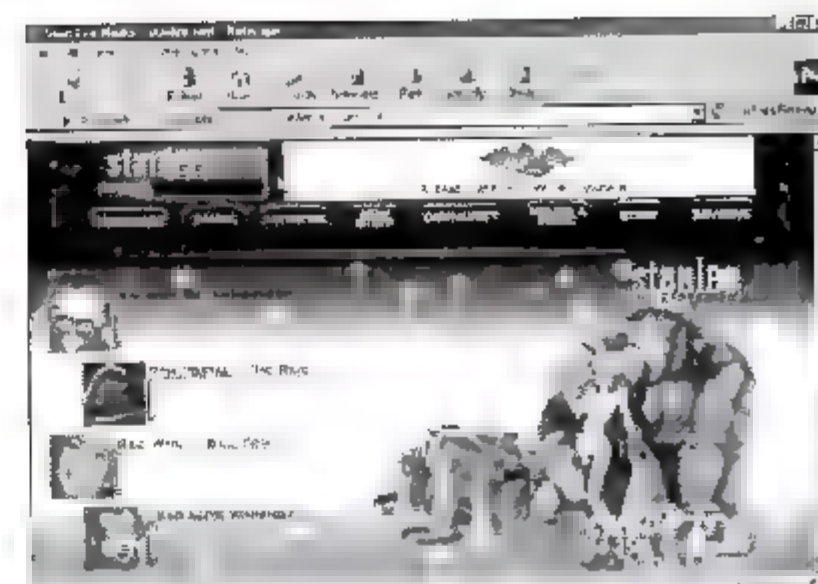

www.darkhorse.com

www.stanlee.net
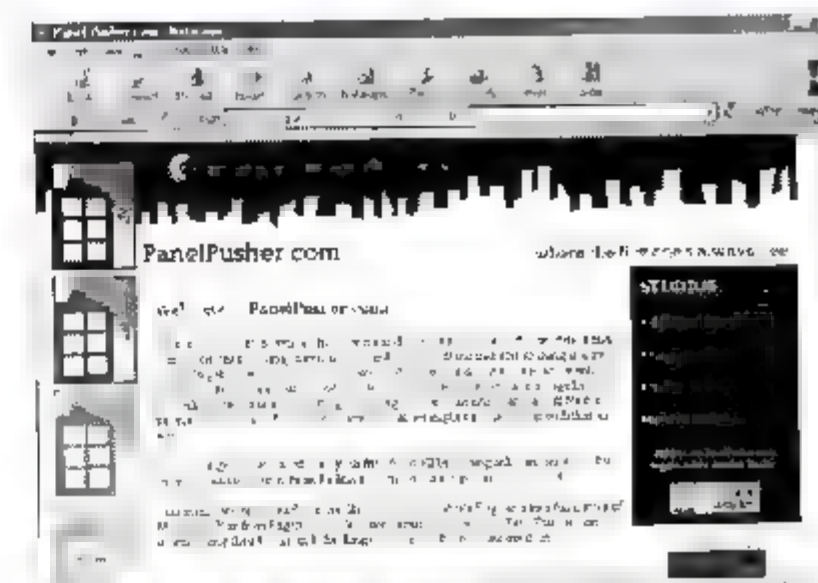

www.panelpusher.com


www.neogryphix.com


www.blackeyecomics.com


www.zark.com


www.astoundingadventures.com

## INKING THE

Have you ever seen an artist's original pencil artwork? Have you ever noticed those little bug-like 'X's' in large open places, as well as many smaller and more varied areas?

I still remember the first time I ever saw this; it was on one of my very first inking assignments. I called the pencil artist and asked him what the heck he was doing? The artist replied (as nicely as possible) that he was keeping graphite off the page, so that I wouldn't smear it all over the place as I inked. My response, of course, was "That's exactly what I thought you had done…and I really appreciate it." Shooo, almost blew it with that penciller!

I was at the Mid-Ohio-Con this past weekend when I was reminded of that event. I was watching Mike Oeming ink some pages for a book that he and Brian Bendis work on together called POWERS. If you have ever had a chance to look at POWERS, you'll know that it has lots of blacks.

One of the first questions that usually comes to an onlooker's mind when watching a penciller work is, "Why is he putting in all those 'X's', instead of just filling in the black area with pencil?" Unfortunately I was never able to close enough to Mike to ask him about his own approach. Hoards of POWERS readers blocked my path and crowded Mike and Brian's table for autographs.

Based on my own experiences with the artist I first mentioned – the one that had kept me from smearing graphite all over the page - I can tell you this: At first I used the 'X's' to show large areas of black, and then have an associate fill in the area with dense opaque ink. But with the way technology has advanced in the industry today, the need to do it this way has lessened. After we ink a page we scan them into the computer.

We can fill-in the black areas by using an art program such as Photoshop 5.5. This is a lot faster, and potentially less messy, then filling in the areas with ink and waiting for it to dry. This will also give you more solid blacks than any ink could. After this, the pages go to lettering and pre-production. In the long run, you haven't added any unnecessary work by scanning. This process really saves you time.

The down side to this approach is that your original artwork looks like your little nephew's coloring book. If you sell your original artwork, you can later fill in the black areas with ink to make them look better. You won't have to worry about the ink being opaque enough for the scanners.

Here are a few things to remember when you're inking:

When leaving an area to be filled on the computer, be sure the line around that area that you plan to fill is inked completely around and no open spaces appear in your line. If you have an open space in your line then when you use the lasso tool, it will grab more white area outside the specified region then you wanted.



Example 1
The circled areas have "open area in the inked line. These must be closed before the se ection can be made

Don't try to fill small areas. If you can fill it quickly with a brush or quill, then do so, otherwise you must zoom in to see the area to fill – and that just adds more time and steps to do the task. Any added moves, zooms, or other such things will only take more time, and defeat the purpose of filling the 'X' area on the computer.



Example 2
The white specks in the circled areas should be filled in before scanning. This will save costly time in unnecessary cleanup on the computer

Get help. If you have an associate, or know of someone that can run the program you're using, have them fill-in the 'X's. This step is to help you speed up the process of inking. And it never hurts to ask - if you're working on a color comic book, maybe the colorist wouldn't mind filling in the black spaces. The road you choose should be the fastest one to. "Cover the X!"
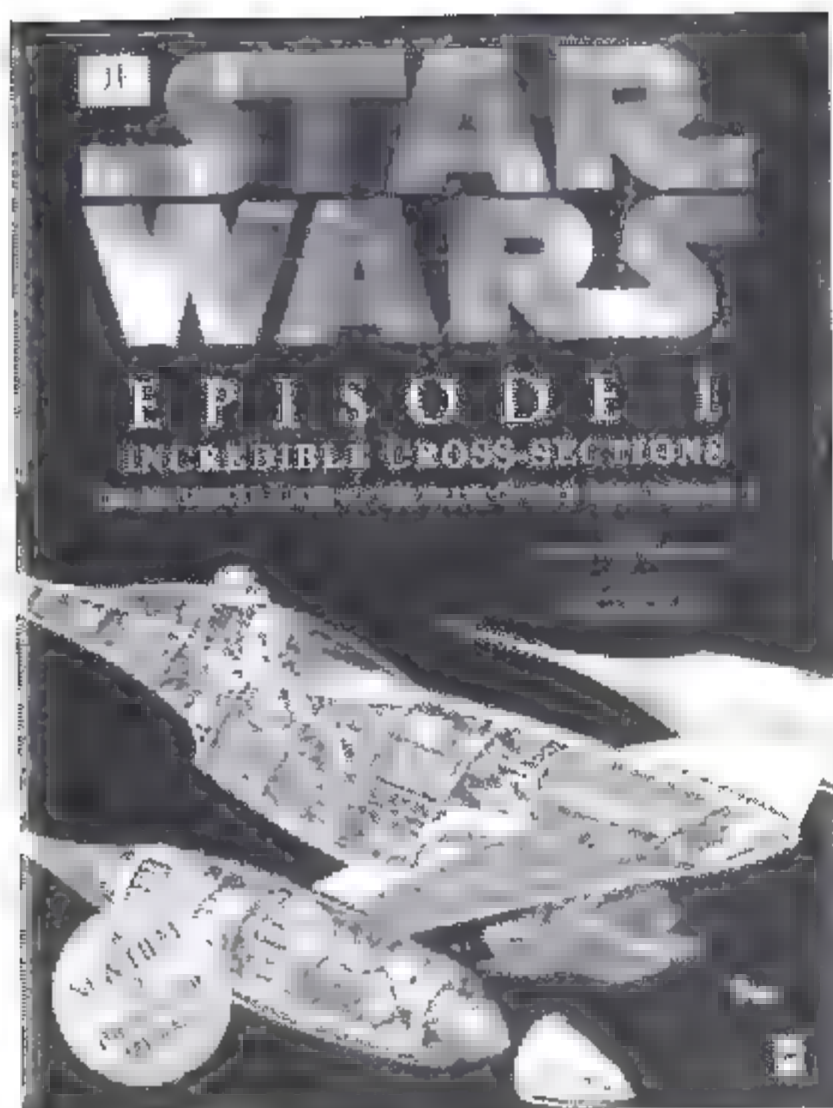
Do you have any inking questions that you want answered? If you do, snail mail them to Sketch Magazine/ Inking the X, 8385 US Highway 42, Florence, KY 41042 - or e-mail them to: inkingtheX@bluelinepro.com.

Keep the ink wet and the pages clean.

Hey, has anyone seen a bucket of halftone dots?

# the BOOK CORNER

## STAR WARS EPISODE 1 INCREDIBLE CROSS-SECTIONS

Published by DK Publishing, INC
Written by David West Reynolds
Illustrated by Hans Jenssen and Richard Chasemore
$19.95 / Hardcover
ISBN 0-7894-3962-X

Remember those pop-up and activity books where you had to find certain items in a jumbled mess of curiosity? Remember the shear wonderment and awe as you analyzed every little detail through your unlimited imagination? Well, once again I find myself passing the time like running water as I return to that intoxicated state of interest. The book Episode 1 Incredible Cross-Sections has the capability to strike out and light the spark of creativity that lingers in the back of all of use who wish to use it. This is the very reason it is included in The Book Corner of Sketch, for the inspiration it can provide when your curiosity knows no bounds.

From the very first page to the very last, this book grabs your attention and maintains and nurtures it throughout. You will be amazed at the shear amount of intricate detail that is displayed in each illustration. The cross-sections of vehicles displayed throughout Star Wars Episode 1 fills you with a sense of completion, letting you know the fine in-and-outs of the space age machines. The descriptions and labeling further increase your understanding, making you realize that there is a purpose behind the layout and design of the machines.

Not only does this book serve as nutrient-filled creativity food for your imagination, but it also makes for a great reference book, to boot. When designing vehicles and other things where layout and function are important, the basic principle behind this book serves as a perfect starting point. There is nothing wrong in designing a ship with the full force of your creativity behind it, and then going back to make logical sense of it all. This book is perfect for such things.

Check out the other Star Wars cross-section books done by DK Publishing. They give you the same great feel, but look into other thing like building or characters then vehicles.
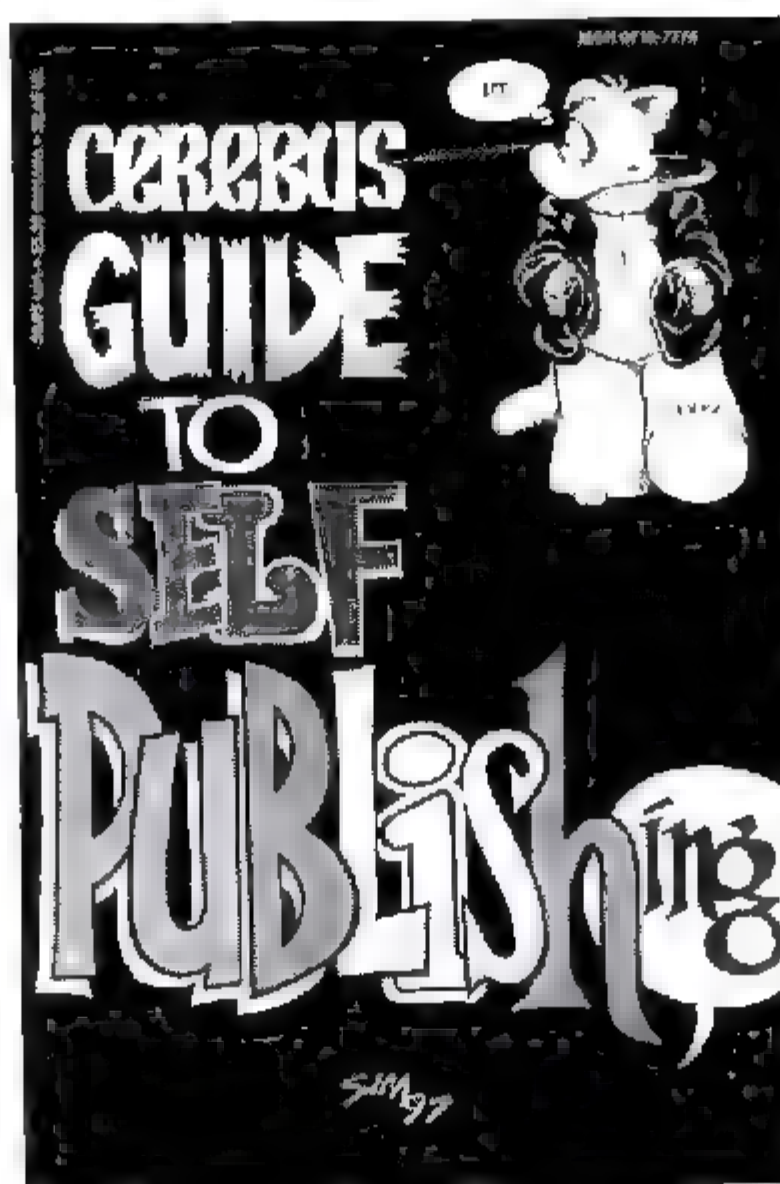
## CEREBUS: GUIDE TO SELF-PUBLISHING

Published and Written
by Dave Sim
$3.95 / Softcover
ISSN 0712-7774

So you decided you want to get in the comic business? You think to yourself, "Were do I start? I don't want to end up eaten alive by my own unguided ambitions. I need some sort of direction." Well, besides Sketch (of course!), you can turn to many publications to get an idea of what it's all about to be a self-publisher. One of these is Dave Sim's Cerebus: Guide to Self Publishing.

You know you are in for a totally honest, truthful treatise about the comic industry by the first illustration on the inside front cover of the book, which doesn't fear to poke fun at its own publication. A very refreshing sight, really.

I won't lie to you; there is not much glamour and hoop-la about this guide. You're in for a long read. But you know what, its worth your time. The author provides you with an excellent narrative throughout, and shares his experiences with you as though he was standing right next to you.

This book covers almost everything in the self-publishing market. It starts you with the honing of your skills and the steps in creating your comic, then right up to soliciting your property to distributors and other media outlets. Dave Sim provides tons of examples of his own, as well as others'; experiences to further illustrate the points he wishes to make.

Beside a somewhat lack-luster presentation, which can be overlooked in light of the amount of informative content, the book doesn't fully provide a sense of the present market – it was originally published nearly four years ago. When reading it, another thing to keep in mind is that the book is based on Sim's own ideas and thoughts. Though they may be well backed up opinions, it doesn't mean they're totally right. They're the opinions of an important comic creator, but opinions can vary.

Needless to say, this is a very good read for anyone interested in the self-publishing market. With just a slight addition, this book can be updated in no time at all.
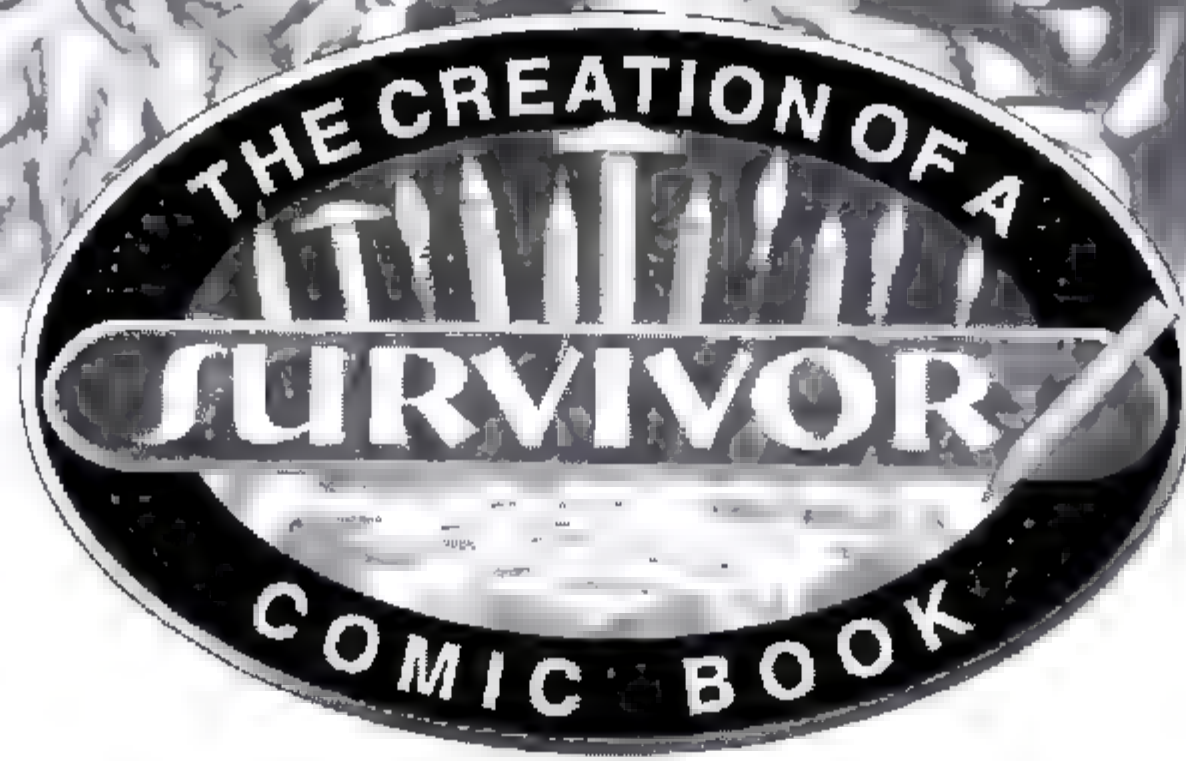
By Bob Hickey

In parts I and II we have discussed our ideas, goals, and character bios. We have been able to touch on a little marketing by reserving the web-site. Now, what do these characters look like...?

## SURVIVOR: THE CREATION OF A COMIC BOOK part III

November 29, 2000
1:11 p.m.

Many aspects of the creation process are happening and developing as time permits. With this being the first story arc, I continue to rework the plot for the first three issues. Within these first few issues we need to build up a character base for each of the major players to give them depth, as well as hopefully getting the readers involved with - and caring for - our characters.

Each issue of our arc needs to work as a single act* in a three act play. We want to save the big cliffhanger for the end of the third issue. We need to have small climaxes for issues 1 and 2 in order to move the story line on. They should be dramatic and attention grabbing, we want the readers to pick up the next issue. A couple books that implement this technique very well are *Danger Girl* and *Battle Chasers*. No wonder they call themselves Cliffhanger!

As I work out my plots and stories, I've been fleshing out and designing a few of the main characters. Since *Race Danger*™ is the main title character, it is very important that he has the charisma and charm that readers want and enjoy. In the past I have referred to him as being a tragic hero. That side of this character, at least for now, won't be shown in his look. Instead, my designs of Race will present him as the situation he is currently involved with dictates.

I refer back to Race Danger's character bio (last issue) for details about his looks and other things that I need to consider when designing him. Remember, characters can change, even after the start of the book. As the story progresses and evolves the characters also evolve and change. Characters that don't change are very dry and make for boring reading. We all change as time goes by; so should our characters.

Race's most distinguished features include a scar under his left eye and his short cut hair.
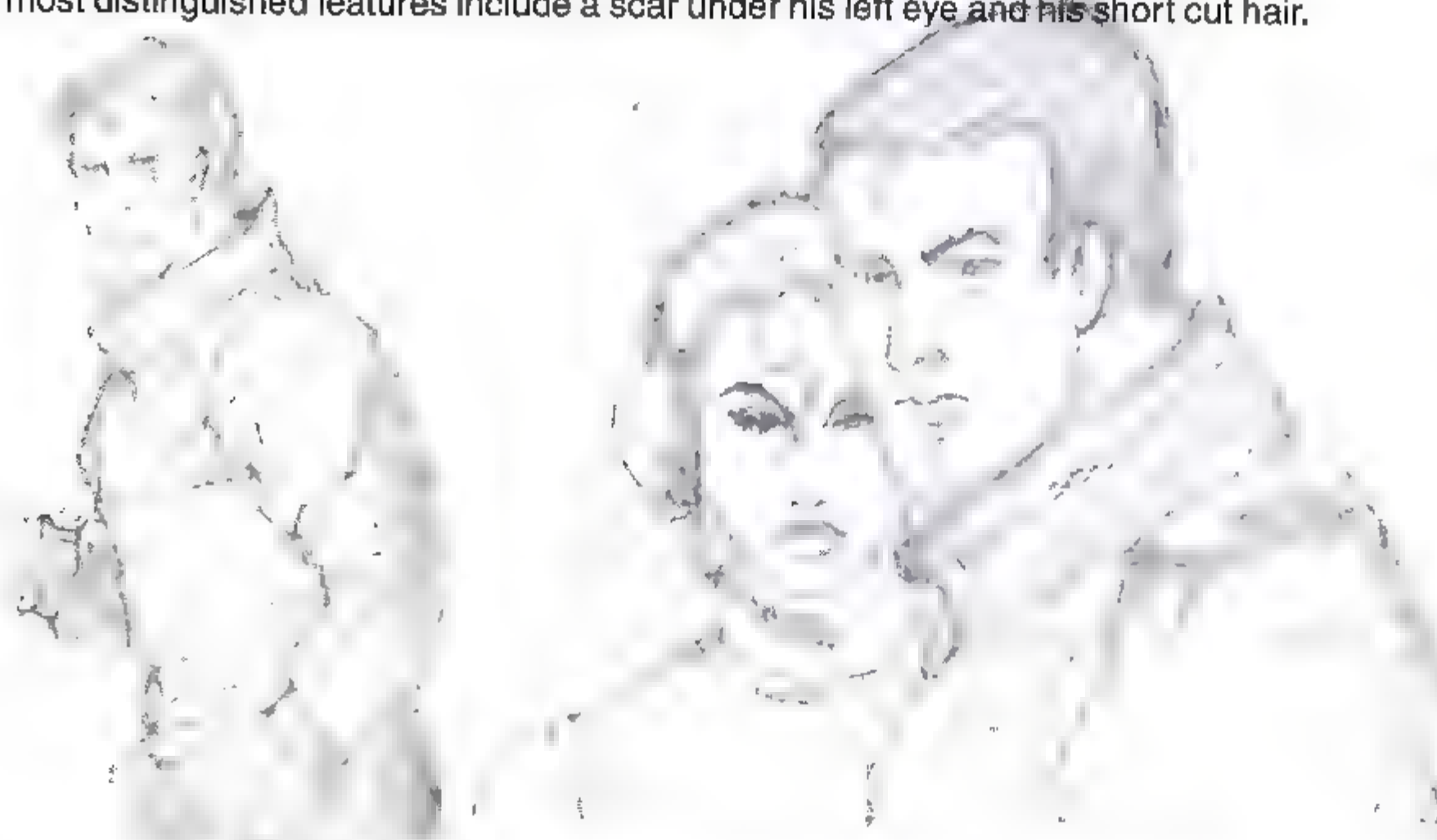
Example 1
His uniform will carry the Blue Line Pro logo, the same logo that will be on the hood of his car (or until someone else wants to pay for this spot). Just like Nascar Racing, Cascar™ Racing will promote the sponsorship of the drivers and their cars throughout all the events and activities it is involved with.
This is the basic racing uniform design.

## Example 2

Next I've worked on Reachel Danger™. I originally want her to be a redhead (see example?) but in recent designs I felt I want more of an Asian decent to her. It will work with what I have planned for Reachel and Race's parents.

Considering she is working around the track a lot, she wears her hair in a ponytail most of the time. Reachal is constantly putting on and removing a racing helmet.

## Example 3

Reachel's uniform is basically the same design as Race's except the collar is smaller.
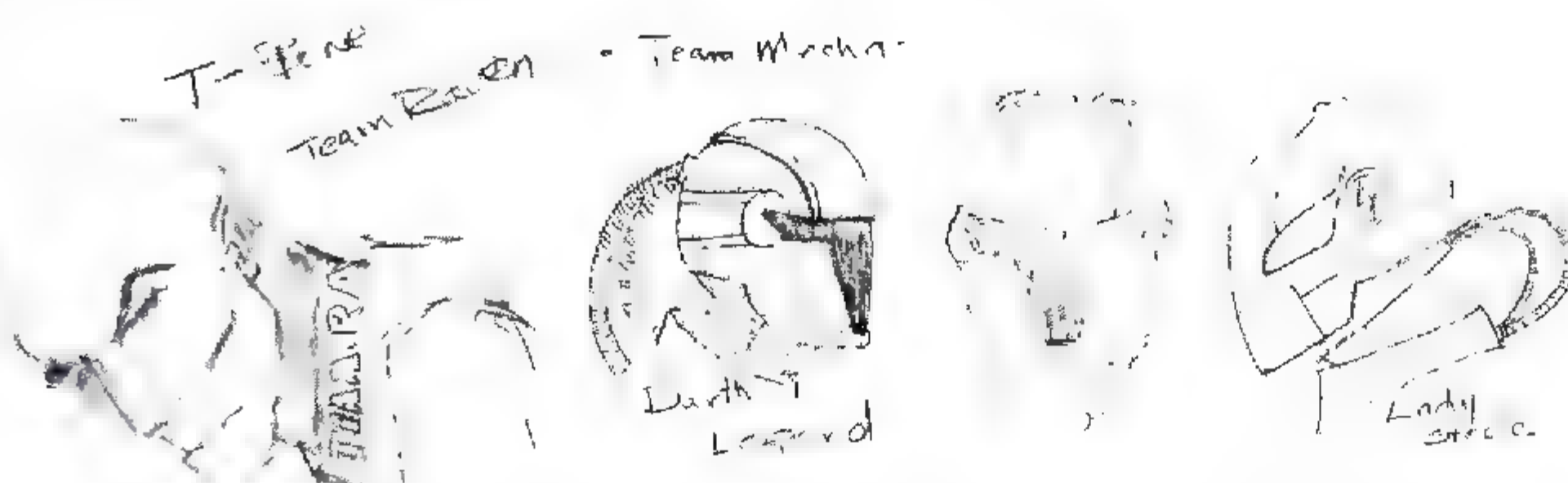
## Example 4

Other characters that will be included in the first story arc are:
Bear - a racer that is sponsored by the country of Russia. He is extremely under funded, and must use old space suits that have been modified for racing. He is an old friend of Papa Danger and is like an uncle to all of them. He is a very stubborn and proud racer that won't accept help directly, so Race and Reachel offer help behind his back, giving parts to his chief mechanic as he needs them. Bear has a heavy build and wears a bulky racing suit.

**Example 5**
Shade Jade™ - a driver for one of the wealthiest teams on the track. She s a top-notch racer, but you would never see her get her hands dirty by working on a car. Shade Jade loves to break hearts; she has a major crush on Race, who wants nothing to do with her.

**Example 6**
Bones, Team Mecha, and many other personalities will fill the pages of RACE DANGER; many of these will develop into main stay characters.

**Example 7**
The next important thing is the car, almost a character in itself.

The backdrop to this whole book is, of course, racing. The cars wil play a big part all their own. Each driver's car will look differently and be easily identifiable by changing the color scheme and the sponsors  Here we show the design of Race's car. One thing to keep in mind as we create and look ahead is, what if this book became successful and we got the opportunity to have some really cool Danger cars made? We want to make the car designs practical and easily reproduced. When I design the cars I try to think more like an animator, knowing that I've got to draw this car in every possible pose throughout the book. So the more creative, but at the same time simpler, the better. (As we move on with Race Danger, I plan on having a few cars design and painted to take around to the conventions as props.)

I've only been able to show a few of the character design that go into creating this book. As we go along I'll be adding more to the web site, so continue to check www.racedanger.com for details.

It looks like the coconut fuel is running out on the torches. Next issue we'll examine the story plot, a few promotional items, and more…

If we survive…

B.
Bob Hickey

> \* The "three acts" work as different scenes to build up a momentum and move the story along  I have previously written mater al using the "three acts," but didn't realize it until recently when I attended a panel discussion by Brian Bendis, where Brian explained what and how the three acts work.
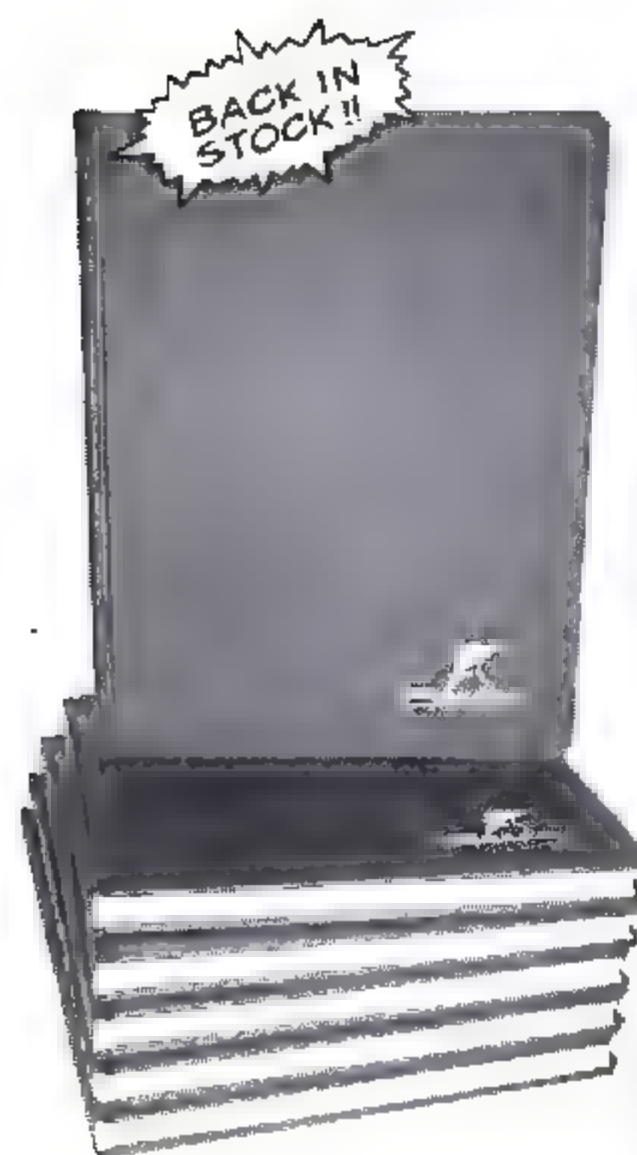
# STRATHMORE COMIC BOOK BOARDS



*Full Trim Format Art Boards*

**PLY:**
Ply is the thickness of the paper. A 2 ply paper has two pieces of paper pressed together and a 3 ply has 3 pieces of paper pressed together which is thicker than 2 ply.



*Traditional Format Art Boards*



*Cover Sheets*

Blue Line now offers comic artist an full trim comic book board to draw your comics. Just recently comic book publishers have been using full trim comic book boards to draw their comics. Blue Line has designed a full trim page that fits most requirements for full bleed comics, but can a so be used to draw traditiona comic book page formats. Special dotted borders helps the artist to keep the important illustrations within an area to be sure it's not lost to trimming.

## PREMIERE300 (STRATHMORE)

### 300 Series Full Trim Format

PRO 300 Series Comic Book Boards is an economical heavy-weight paper. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the Pro 300 Series is preprinted with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals do.

• **PRO 300 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
- **ITEM# BL1041 *SRP $17.00***
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

• **PRO 300 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor.
- **ITEM# BL1042 *SRP $17.00***
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

## PREMIERE400 (STRATHMORE)

### 400 Series Full Trim Format

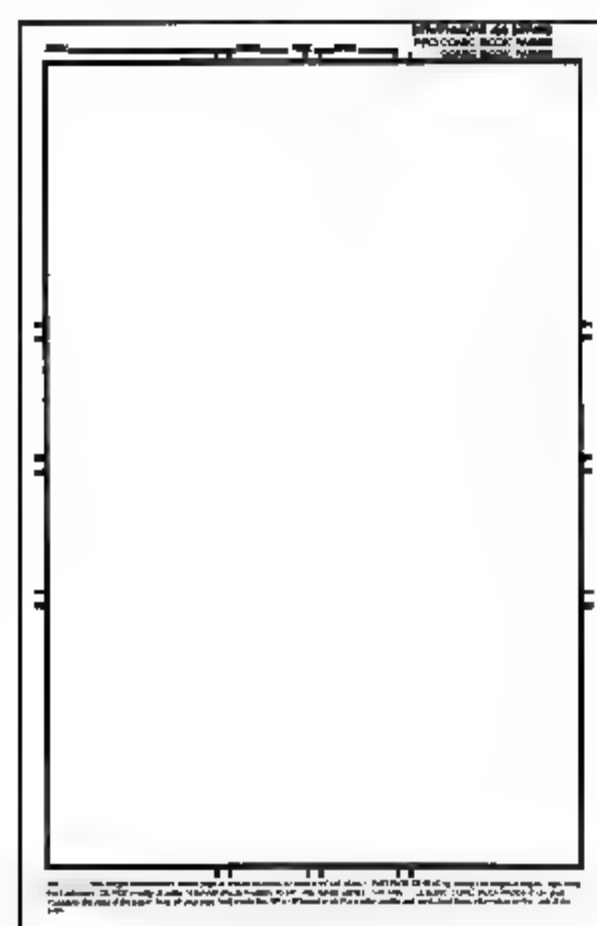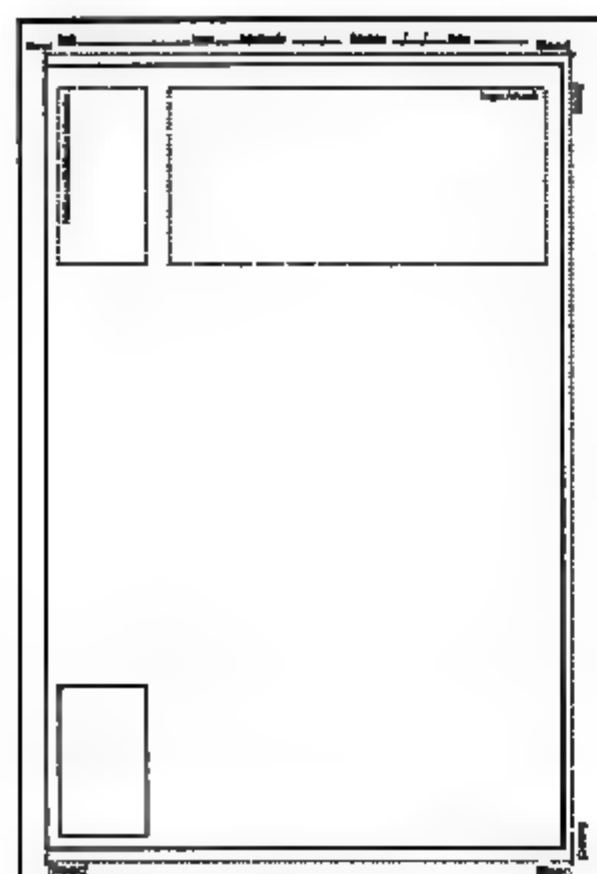400 Series already has a very serious history. Comic Book Boards 400 series is printed on the finest art paper available, **Strathmore**. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the 400 Series is preprinted with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals draw.

• **S400 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board is ideal for detailed ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.
- **ITEM# BL1043 SMOOTH 2-PLY *SRP $19.00***
- **ITEM# BL1045 SMOOTH 3-PLY *SRP $28.00***

• **S400 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, inks, charcoal and pastel.
12 pages per pack
11 x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.
- **ITEM# BL1044 REGUALR 2-PLY *SRP $19.00***
- **ITEM# BL1046 REGULAR 3-PLY *SRP $28.00***

## PREMIERE500 (STRATHMORE)

### 500 Series Full Trim Format

500 series comic book boards is the top of the line for art paper. Strathmore 500 is 100% cotton fiber, Acid free and unsurpassed for fine pen and pencil work

• **500 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.
- **ITEM# BL1047 SMOOTH 2-PLY *SRP $41.00***
- **ITEM# BL1049 SMOOTH 3-PLY *SRP $57.75***

• **500 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged.
- **ITEM# BL1048 REGULAR 2-PLY *SRP $41.00***
- **ITEM# BL1050 REGULAR 3-PLY *SRP $57.75***

## PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
### FULL TRIM FORMAT

Blue Line has taken the quality paper that they have used in the "Pro" pages for years and printed a newly designed Full Trim border format in non-photo blue ink.

This offering the artist the quality of Pro pages with an advanced page border.

In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommened), markers, wash, acrylics.
• **ITEM# BL1038 *SRP $15.95***
24 pages per pack.
11" x 17' 3- ply brite art boards with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo border printed/ bagged

## PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
### TRADITIONAL FORMAT

Pro Comic Book Boards brite white surface offers a smooth surface to pencils and inking with a brush literally glides across the surface (quill pen not recommended). Pro has offered thousands of artist the opportunity to begin their careers on a pre-printed boardslike the

professional publisher uses

Traditional Format has the original 10" x 15" image border with panel markers for a traditional page layout.

Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15". In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommened) markers, wash, acrylics.
- **ITEM# BL1001 *SRP $15.95***
24 pages per pack.
11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 10" x 15" non-photo image printed and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo image printed/ bagged.

## COMIC BOOK BOARDS

(*Traditional Format*)

Comic Book Boards are specifically laid out with an image area for standard comic book designs. These boards like the other comic book boards offer an area to write the name of the book the artist is drawing, issue number, page number and date. This helps to keep track of your boards and where they belong. Double page spreads are a snap for an artist. Just take two comic book boards and then butt the sides together, apply tape down the back of those boards and then the artist is ready to illustrate a double-page drawing. Fast and easy with no cutting. They are 24 pages of Brite Art Index. Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15".

Use pencil, ink (brush), marker, wash.
- **ITEM# BL1003 *SRP $12.95***
24 pages per pack.
11" x 17" pages with a 10" x 15" non-photo image/ bagged

## COMIC BOOK COVER SHEETS

These Comic Book Cover Sheets, show a border for your drawing with pre-marked bleeds for trimming with an area for the possible placement for the book's logo and company information clearly marked. This helps to keep all of the important elements of the covers from being covered up when the book logo and company info are placed later. They are 12 pages of 2-ply premium Brite art index board that come bagged and feature non-photo blue ink. Page size is 11" x 17" with an image area of 10 3/4" x 16".
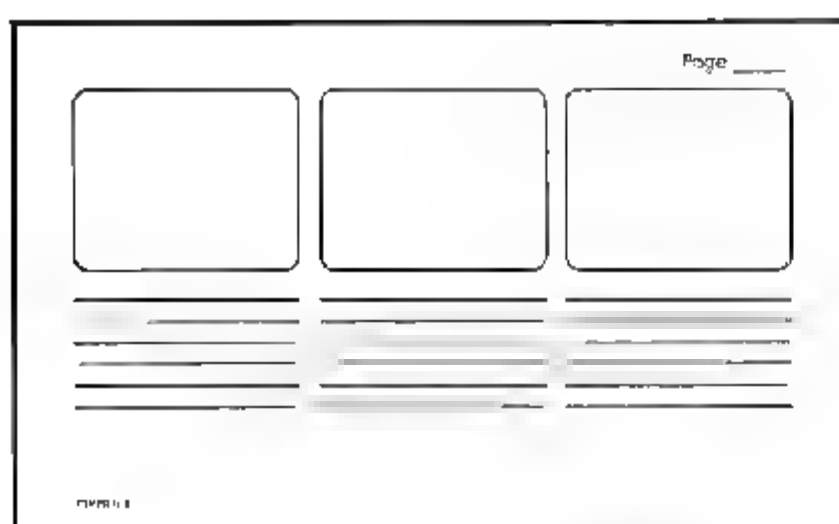- **ITEM# BL1007 *SRP $9.95***
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" art pages printed with a 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo blue border printed/ bagged.

# CUSTOMIZED ART PAPERS

## STORYBOARD TEMPLATES

Animators and Storyboard artist! Blue Line Storyboard Templates offers animators and writers a quick and easy way to show movement and sequences of a story or animation.

Storyboard Templates have three large panels with lines below each for detailed art and storytelling.

- **ITEM# BL1018** *SRP $13.95*

100 sheets of 60 lb. 8 1/2 x 14 pages with 3 panels padded w th colored cover.

## CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK!

Blue Line has developed a simple and inexpensive step by step to create your very first comic book, that's fun, easy and comprehensive. A box set of Blue Line products that aid a person in making their own comic! It includes 1 Character Template, 6 Concept Sketch Pages, 6 Comic Book Layout Pages, 24 Comic Book Pages, 1 Comic Book Cover Sheet and a 24 page instructional comic book.

- **ITEM# BL1002** *SRP $21.95*

Box Set. 37 art pages / 24 page b&w instructional comic book / full color die cut box / shrink wrapped.

## POCKET SKETCH PAD

50 pages of heavy illustration board to carry around in your pocket to have ready when your hit with a revolutionary vision. Great for quick sketches and designs. Featuring Blue Line's quality illustration paper. Great for penciling, inking and washes.

50 pages / 5" x 9 1/2" / padded / two-color cover
- **Item # BL1051** *SRP $5.95*

## LAYOUT PAGES

Comic Book Layout Pages uses premium bond paper and printed in non-photo blue, of course, features markings to layout four thumbnails per sheet to detail your comic book page ideas and room for notations and other information.

Used for story boarding your comic book story. A geat too for artists or writers to work out details for the story along with layouts of pages.
- **ITEM# BL1005** *SRP $8.95*

30 8 1/2" x 11" pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.
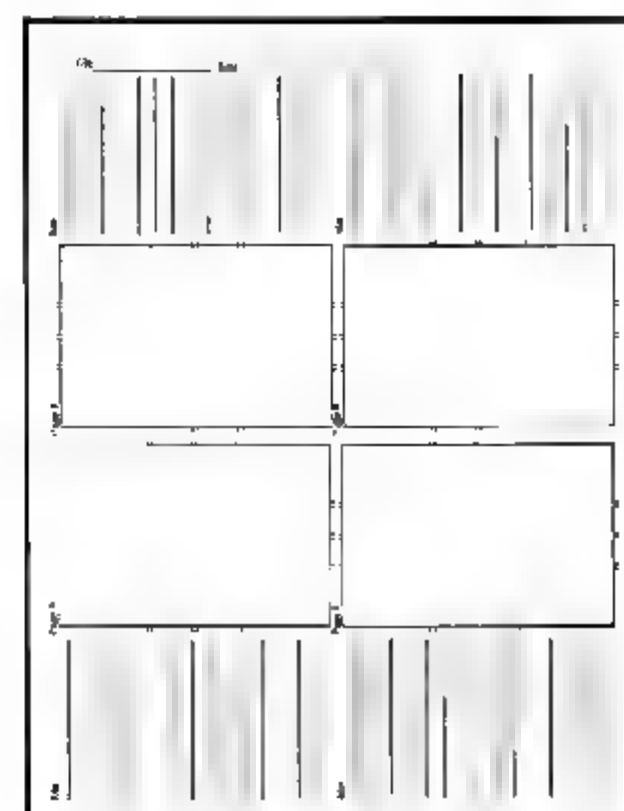
## CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES

Record and organize your creative Ideas on a convenient, qua ity art board. Concept Sketch Pages are made from premium index board featuring non-photo blue ink so that the artist can ink his illustrations on a non-repro surface. Concept Sketch Pages offer an image area for an illustrator to draw a character scene or anything. And, it also gives room for written information to be included with the artwork. This is handy when a character is designed for a comic book and you want to include his bio, powers, etc., or a Role Playing character you're playing. These pages can easily be hole punched and inserted into a binder. A character template is even included for quick and easy character creations!
- **ITEM# BL1004** *SRP $8.95*

25 art pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.
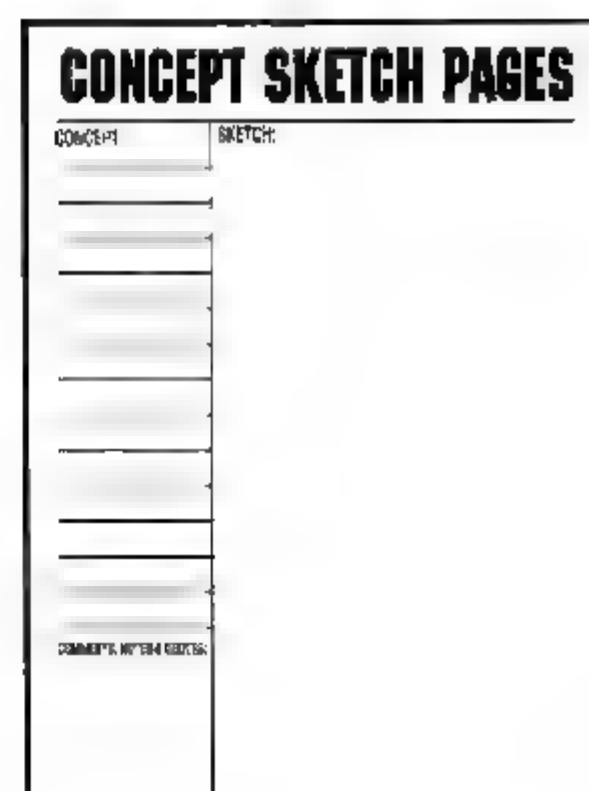
## BLUE LINE SAMPLER II

If you haven't tried Blue Line products, here's your chance! The Blue Line Sampler includes 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Ful Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. All in non-photo blue, of course! That's 25 pages of five different Blue Line products! Check out all Blue Line and Blue Line Pro products in one fell swoop!
- **ITEM# BL1040** *SRP $13.95*

25 pages of 8 different Blue Line products. 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Com.c Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. 25 pages per pack.

# FONTS, WORK BOOK SERIES



## BLUE LINE COMIC BOOK LETTERING FONT SERIES 1

Blue Line now offers creators an inexpensive lettering font.

BLCOMIC font is formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. BLSFX is a special effects font with pre-created sound effects that are ready for you to drop into place.

Also included is user confgurable word balloons in .eps format.
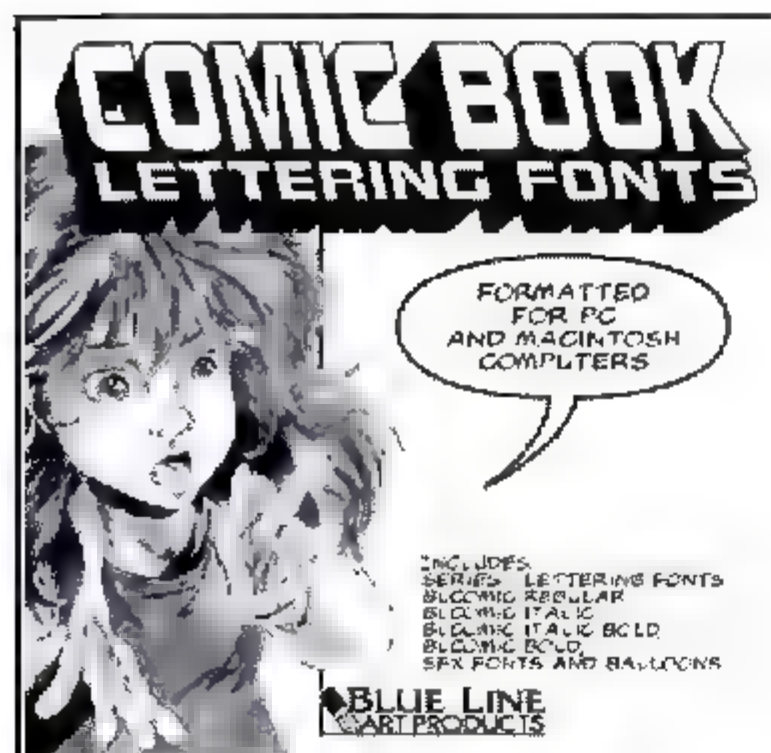
**ITEM# BL1019  SRP $19.95**

Incudes: BLCOMIC font (Regular, Bold, Italic, Italic Bold). BLSFX font and configurable word baloons.

3 1/2 disk PC and Mac. format.

BLCOMIC FONT:  ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

BLSFX FONT:

ARRGH!  BLAM  CRASH  DOOM  YAH!  FAWOOSH

GLUB  HAH  JINGLE  MUNCH

OUCH  POW  ?  RUMBLE  SPLASH TAP  UGGH  VA-ROOOM

WHAM  YAWN  ZAP

## SKETCH BOOK SERIES

Blue Line offers two different sizes of Sketch Books. A Regular 81/2" x 11" size and the Traditional 11" x 17" size both are filled with 200 pages of 70 lb. art paper. Both have hard covers with library quality stitch binding for durability and makes it easier to draw without an art table.

### SKETCH BOOK REGULAR (8 1/2" x 11")

This standard sized hard covered book offers anyone with the ability to pick up a pencil the opportunty to draw. An artist could create their own library of sketches. Great for when you don't want to carry a sketch board around or your just sitting around with your friends.

Also a good way to collect artist signatures and sketches at conventions!

**- Item #BL1010** / 200 pg  Hard cover book. **SRP $24.95**

### SKETCH BOOK TRADITIONAL (11" x 17")

This Sketch Book offers the artist the ability to draw the size they're going to draw their original comic book pages

**- Item #BL1011** / 200 pg. Hard cover book. **SRP $27.95**

## BLUE LINE: A GUIDE TO THE COMIC BOOK BUSINESS

Every fan who reads comics has at one time or another felt the urge to join in on the fun, to take a more active role, to become a player instead of a spectator. In short, to create. You have the desire, now you need a plan.

That's where Blue Line's A Guide To The Comic Book Business comes in  It covers all of the basics for starting and maintain.ng a successfu career in the comic book industry. It doesn't matter if your skills le in penciling or management  ths book tells you what to do to turn your hobby into a paid profession.

The first chapter gets you up-to-date on how the industry ls set up. It gives you the basic information necessary to be a knowledgeable participant in the comics field. Now that you're seated, we serve the appetizers - how to go about creatng your own comics  After you've digested this important info, it's time for the main course. You'll discover proven methods for making yourself an outstanding candidate Then, we take a look at other jobs in the industry outside of the creative aspect for all of you wannabe corporate types. For a side dish, chapter five deals with that small but growng niche of the industry - the small press and self-publisher. Finally, dessert. We clue you in on effectve ways to advertise and promote your work so that you can actually make money off of your talents.

So, for everyone who's ever dreamed of being on the other side of the table at a comic convention, doodled more in class notebooks than actually taking notes, this book is for you.

Forward by Beau Smith Executive Director of Publishing for McFarlane Productions

Written by Danie Souder. Edited by Bob Hickey

**- ITEM# BL1039  SRP $17.95**

90 pages / b&w with full color cover. Spiral bound
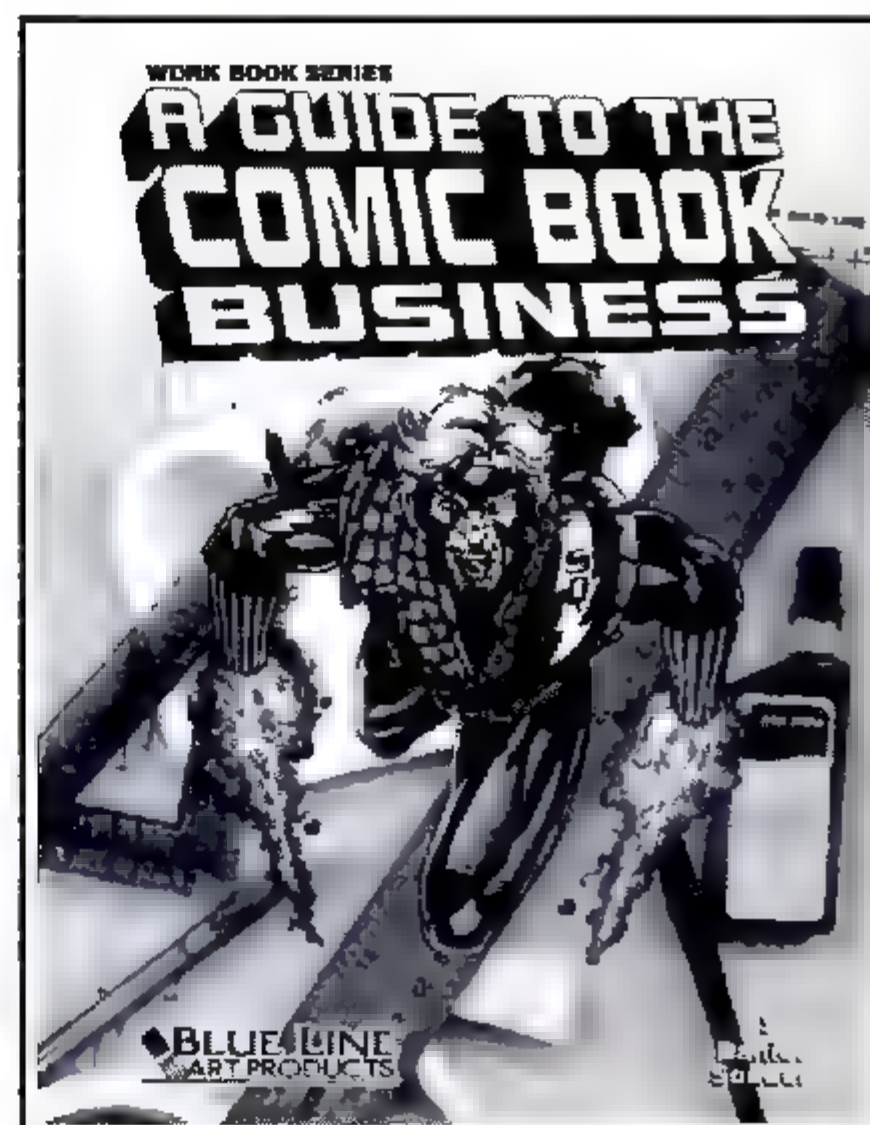
# ART SUPPLIES

## INDIA INK

**• Higgins Black India Ink**
A non-clogging ink for lettering pens and brushes Opaque semi-gloss black finish and waterproof
*-AR-4415 Black Ink*
(Higgins) 1oz. $3.00
**- AR-EF44011 Black Magic Ink**
(Higgins) 1oz. $3.50
Higgins Waterproof Black Magic Ink is non-corrosive free-flowing and non-clogging. Great for use on tracing vellum and other film surfaces

**• Pelikan Drawing Ink**
One of the finest drawing ink available, Pelikan ink is great with technical pens, graphic and fine art papers or tracing cloth.
**- AR-PE211862** Black India Ink (Pelikan) 1oz. $4 75
**- AR-PE211169** Black India Ink (Pelikan) 8oz. $18 75
**• Pelikan "T" Ink**
Permanent and completely waterproof Good with matte-surfaces or waterproof tracing cloth.
**- AR-PE221374** Black Ink Pelikan "T" 1oz $6.00
**• KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH INK**
Rapidograph Ink, Black, opaque ink for drafting film, paper, and tracing cloth. For use with Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Pens.
**- AR-3084-FI** Koh-I-Noor Ink  $3 95

**• WHITE OUT**
FW Acrylic Artist Waterproof White Ink Great for use with technical pens, brushes, and dip pens.
**- A- R-FW-O11** FW White Acrylic Artist Ink $5 00

## BRUSHES

**• Winsor/Newton Series 7**
Made with Kolinsky sable with traditional black handle Great brush
**- AR-5007001** Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#1 $18 95
**- AR-5007002** Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#2 $22 95
**Round Brushes**
Made with natural Sable with excellent edges and points for precise strokes.
**- AR-NB-38-0** Round Brush Size #0 $3 00
**- AR-NB-38-1** Round Brush Size #1 $3.25
**- AR-NB-38-2** Round Brush Size #2 $3 95
**- AR-056009016** Round Brush Size#3 $3 95

## PENCILS & QUILL PENS

**• Non-Photo Blue Pencil**
Makes marks not appear when artwork is reproduced. Very useful.
**- AR-761-5** Non-photo Blue Pencil $ 60
**• Quill Inking Pen**
Quill Pens offers super-fine flexible point. Used by many professional inkers.

**- AR-H9432** Quill Inking Pen #102 (Tip & Holder) $2.25
**- AR-H9402** 12 Crow Quill #102 Tips (Inking Pen Nibs only) $13 95

## ERASERS

**• Kneaded Eraser**
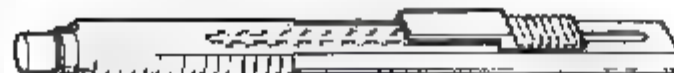Gray soft bendable eraser used for pencil and charcoal.
**- AR-1224** Kneaded Rubber Eraser Large $1.15

**• Eraser Pencils**
Peel off wrap ideal for detail erasing.
**- AR-400** Eraser Pencils $1 15

**• Pental Clic**
Pen style holder, retract as needed
**- AR-ZE-21C** Pentel Clic Eraser/Holder $1 95
**- AR-ZER-2** Pentel Refill Erasers $1 75
**• Erasing Shield**
Metal shield with different sizes and shapes
**- AR-FT-5370** Erasing Shield $1.10

## PENCIL SHARPNER

Canister Sharpener offers metal blades with high impact plastic container.
**- AR-MR906** Canister Sharper $3 95

## MECHANICAL PENCIL

Berol Mechanical Pencil is precision made w/button lead release and light aluminum barrel
**• Berol Mechanical Pencil 2mm.**
**- AR-BP10C** $6 95
**• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. HB**
**- AR-BP2375-HB** $10 50
**• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2H**
**- AR-BP2375-2H** $10 50
**• 12-Non-Photo Blue Leads-2mm.**
**- AR-BP2376-NPB** $10.50
**• Mechanical Pencil Sharpener**
Provides professional point for standard leads
**- AR-BP14C** Pencil Shapener (Mech. Pencil) $10 75

## KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH PENS

Rapidograph Pens are made of impact and chemical-resistant components for drawing and specialty inks. Good balance and self-polishing stainless steel points.
**- AR-3165-06/0** Tech Pen Size 6x0 (13mm) $27 00
**- AR-3165-04/0** Tech Pen Size 4x0 (18mm) $27.00
**- AR-3165-03/0** Tech Pen Size 3x0 (.25mm) $22.00
**- AR-3165-02/0** Tech Pen Size 2x0 (.3mm) $22 00
**- AR-3165-01/0** Tech Pen Size #0 (.35mm) $22 00
**- AR-3165-01** Tech Pen Size #1 (.5mm) $22 00
**- AR-3165-02** Tech Pen Size #2 (6mm) $22 00
**- AR-3165-03** Tech Pen Size #3 (8mm) $22 00
**- AR-3165-04** Tech Pen Size #4 (1mm) $22 00
**- AR-3165-06** Tech Pen Size #6 (1.4mm) $22.00
**- AR-3165-07** Tech Pen Size #7 (2mm) $22 00

## STAEDTLER MARSMATIC 700

Marsmatic 700 Technical Pen offers extremely smooth synthetic ruby tip that is very smooth. Points are extremely wear-resistant and durable.
**- AR-700-013** 5x0 .13mm $35.95
**- AR-700-018** 4x0 .18mm $31.95
**- AR-700-025** 3x0 .25mm $27 95
**- AR-700-030** 00 .30mm $25 96
**- AR-700-035** 0 .35mm $25.96
**- AR-700-045** 1 .45mm $25 96
**- AR-700-050** 2 .50mm $25 96
**- AR-700-070** 2.5 .70mm $25.96
**- AR-700-080** 3 .80mm $25.96
**• Marsmatic 700 Tech. Pen Set**
includes sizes .30, .35, .45, and .50mm.
**- AR-700-S4** 00,0,1,2 $77.95

**• ALVIN PENSTIX**
Graphic waterproof drawing pen offering India Ink density. Black permanent drawing ink.
**- AR-4013-EEF** 0 3mm $1.55
**- AR-4017-F** 0.7mm $1.55
**- AR-4015-EF** 0.5mm $1.55
**• Penstix Set**
Includes all 3 Pentrix Sizes
**- AR-4033** .3mm, 7mm, 5mm $4.45

**• Penstix Drawing/Sketching Markers**
Offers maximum India drawing ink like density. Black waterproof permanent ink.
**- AR-3013-EEF** 0.3mm ExEx Fine $1 55
**- AR-3015-EF** 0.5mm Ex Fine $1 55
**- AR-3017-F** 0.7mm Fine $1.55
**• Pentrix Drawing/Sketching Marker Set**
Set of all 3 sizes.
**- AR-3033** Set of 3 .3,.5,.7 mm $4.45

## SAKURA PIGMA BRUSH

Archival performance with flexible brush style nib. Very fine lines or broad strokes. Water/chem proof + fade resistant
**- AR-XSDK-BR-49** Black $3 00

## ALVIN DRAWING PEN/MARKERS

**• Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers**
Permanent waterproof ink that dries instantly. Nibs set in stainless steel sleeves for protection.
**- AR-TL01** 0.1mm $1 95
**- AR-TL02** 0.2mm $1.95
**- AR-TL03** 0.3mm $1 95
**- AR-TL04** 0.4mm $1.95
**- AR-TL05** 0.5mm $1.95
**Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/Markers Sets**
**- AR-TLP5** set of 5 (all sizes above) $10 00
**- AR-TLP3** set of 3 (1, 3, 5mm) $6.00

## PRISMACOLOR MARKERS

**• Prismacolor Singles**
Unique four in one design creates four line widths from one double-ended marker. Extra broad nibs imitates paint brush stroke while fine and thin nibs achieve gentle refined strokes.
- All Colors are available!
- All Singles $3.30
- Metallic: single nib
**- AR-PM117** (Broad) Metallic Silver
**- AR-PM118** (Fine) Metallic Silver
**- AR-PM119** (Broad) Metallic Gold
**- AR-PM120** (Fine) Metallic Gold
- All Metallic Singles $3.30
**PRISMACOLOR SETS**

**• Primary/Secondary 12-Set**
Includes: AR-PM 50, 19, 15, 57, 6, 4, 32, 44, 53, 31, 61, and 9.
*-AR-BP12N* $40 00
**• Cool Grey 12-set**
*-AR-BP12P* $40 00
**• Warm Grey 12-set**
*-AR-BP12Q* $40.00
**• French Grey 12-set**
*-AR-BP12R* $40 00
**• Prismacolor 24 set**
*-AR-BP24S* $79 25
**• Prismacolor 48 set**
*-AR-BP48S* $158 50
**• Prismacolor 72 set**
*-AR-BP72S* $238.00
**• Prismacolor 120 set**
*-AR-BP120S* $394 00
**• Prismacolor 144 set**
*-AR-BP144S* $470 00
**• Empty Studio Marker Stacker**
*-AR-STUDIO* $18 00
**• Prismacolor 24 set w/hard carrying case**
*-AR-BP24C* $90 00
**• Prismacolor 48 set w/hard carrying case**
*-AR-BP48C* $170.00
- All Colors are available!
- AR-PM1 Process Red
- AR-PM4 Crimson Red
- AR-PM5 Scarlet Lake
- AR-PM6 Carmine Red
- AR-PM7 Magenta
- AR-PM8 Pink
- AR-PM10 Blush Pink
- AR-PM11 Deco Pink
- AR-PM12 Light Pink
- AR-PM13 Poppy Red
- AR-PM14 Pale Vermilion
- AR-PM15 Yellowed Orange
- AR-PM16 Orange
- AR-PM17 Sunburst Yellow
- AR-PM18 Yellow Ochre
- AR-PM19 Canary Yellow
- AR-PM21 Tulip Yellow
- AR-PM23 Cream
- AR-PM24 Yellow Chartreuse
- AR-PM25 Spring Green
- AR-PM26 Lt. Olive Green
- AR-PM27 Chartreuse
- AR-PM28 Olive Green
- AR-PM31 Dark Green
- AR-PM32 Parrot Green
- AR-PM33 Hunter Green
- AR-PM36 Lime Green
- AR-PM37 Aquemarine
- AR-PM38 Teal Blue
- AR-PM39 True Blue
- AR-PM40 Copenhagen Blue
- AR-PM42 Violet Blue
- AR-PM43 Indigo Blue
- AR-PM44 Ultramarine
- AR-PM45 Navy Blue
- AR-PM46 Light Aqua
- AR-PM47 Non-photo Blue
- AR-PM48 Lt Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM50 Violet
- AR-PM51 Black Grape
- AR-PM53 Mulberry
- AR-PM55 Rhodamine
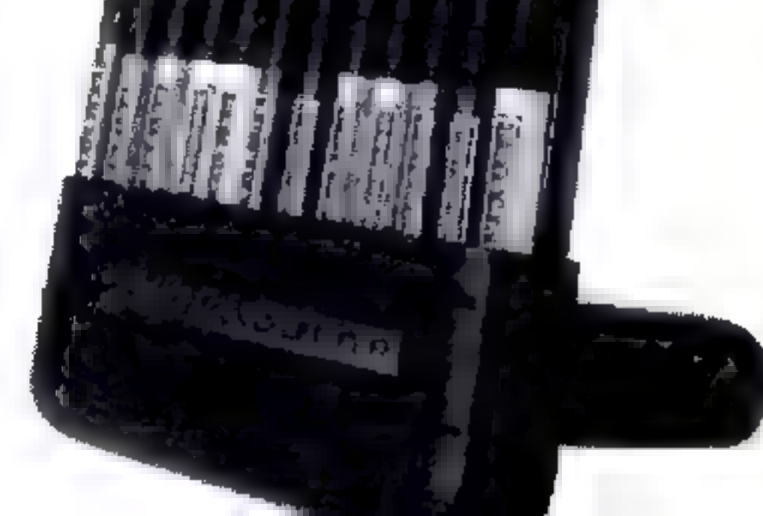- AR-PM59 Lavender
- AR-PM60 Violet Mist
- AR-PM61 Dark Umber
- AR-PM62 Sepia
- AR-PM65 Sienna Brown
- AR-PM69 Goldenrod

# ART SUPPLIES

- AR-PM70 Sand
- AR-PM71 Buff
- AR-PM72 Eggshell
- AR-PM73 Flagstone Red
- AR-PM78 Brick Beige
- AR-PM79 Brick White
- AR-PM80 Putty
- AR-PM82 Terra Cotta
- AR-PM86 Cherry
- AR-PM88 Dark Brown
- AR-PM89 Light Walnut
- AR-PM90 Walnut
- AR-PM93 Burnt Ochre
- AR-PM95 Light Tan
- AR-PM96 Blond Wood
- AR-PM97 Warm Black
- AR-PM98 Black
- AR-PM99 Warm Grey 10%
- AR-PM100 Warm Grey 20%
- AR-PM101 Warm Grey 30%
- AR-PM102 Warm Grey 40%
- AR-PM103 Warm Grey 50%
- AR-PM104 Warm Grey 60%
- AR-PM105 Warm Grey 70%
- AR-PM106 Warm Grey 80%
- AR-PM107 Warm Grey 90%
- AR-PM108 Cool Grey 10%
- AR-PM109 Cool Grey 20%
- AR-PM110 Cool Grey 30%
- AR-PM111 Cool Grey 40%
- AR-PM112 Cool Grey 50%
- AR-PM113 Cool Grey 60%
- AR-PM114 Cool Grey 70%
- AR-PM115 Cool Grey 80%
- AR-PM116 Cool Grey 90%
- AR-PM122 Salmon Pink
- AR-PM123 Spanish Orange
- AR-PM124 Limepool
- AR-PM125 Peacock Blue
- AR-PM126 Cerulean Blue
- AR-PM127 Imperial Violet
- AR-PM128 Parma Violet
- AR-PM129 Dahlia Purple
- AR-PM130 Deco Orange
- AR-PM131 Deco Yellow
- AR-PM132 Jasmine
- AR-PM133 Deco Pink
- AR-PM134 Deco Blue
- AR-PM135 Deco Green
- AR-PM136 Deco Aqua
- AR-PM137 Clay Rose
- AR-PM138 Pink Rose
- AR-PM140 Celadon Green
- AR-PM141 Jade Green
- AR-PM142 Brittany Blue
- AR-PM143 Mediterranean Blue
- AR-PM144 Cloud Blue
- AR-PM145 Blue Slate
- AR-PM146 Periwinkle
- AR-PM147 Greyed Lavender
- AR-PM148 Cornflower
- AR-PM149 Bronze
- AR-PM150 Mahogany Red
- AR-PM151 Raspberry
- AR-PM152 Henna
- AR-PM153 Pumpkin Orange
- AR-PM154 Mineral Orange
- AR-PM155 French Grey 10%
- AR-PM156 French Grey 20%
- AR-PM157 French Grey 30%
- AR-PM158 French Grey 40%
- AR-PM159 French Grey 50%
- AR-PM160 French Grey 60%
- AR-PM161 French Grey 70%
- AR-PM162 French Grey 80%
- AR-PM163 French Grey 90%
- AR-PM164 Peacock Green
- AR-PM165 Grass Green
- AR-PM166 True Green
- AR-PM167 Apple Green
- AR-PM168 Dark Purple
- AR-PM169 Tuscan Red
- AR-PM170 Peach
- AR-PM171 Lilac
- AR-PM172 Light Umber
- AR-PM173 Light Violet
- AR-PM184 Forest Green
- AR-PM185 Spruce
- AR-PM186 Emerald
- AR-PM187 Leaf Green
- AR-PM190 Tangerine
- *All Single Markers $3.30*

## RULERS
- **Stainless Steel Rulers** *offering flexible steel with non-skid cork backing.*
- AR-200-12 *Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing* $5.95
- AR-200-18 *Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing* $6.95
- **Plastic Ruler** *1 inch with 1/16" markings and metric markings.*
- AR-C36 *Ruler 12" (plastic ruler)* $1.25
- AR-18 *Ruler 6" (plastic ruler)* $.50
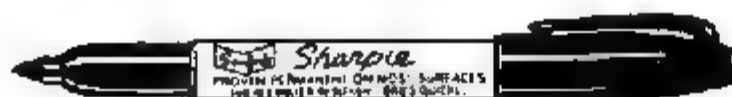
- **SHARPIE MARKERS**
*Permanent markers with high intensity ink. Quick drying.*
- AR-SA37101 *Ultra Fine Black* $1.30
- AR-SA35101 *Extra Fine Black* $1.30
- AR-SA30101 *Regular Black* $1.30
- AR-SA33101 *Super Sharpie* $1.30

- **METALLIC PENS**
*Offers high quality metallic ink. Great for autographs.*
- AR-SA46115 *Gold Pen* $4.50
- AR-SA46120 *Silver Pen* $4.50

- **CHINA MARKING PENCILS**
*Offers moisture resistant, non-toxic odor-free pigments. Self Sharpening Packaged in box of 12*
- AR-173T *Black* $10.75 (per dz.)
- AR-164T *White* $10.75 (per dz.)

## T-SQUARES
- **Plastic T-squares** *offering flexible plastic with both metric and standard measurements*
- AR-HX02 *Plastic 12"* $3.95
- AR-NBA18 *Plastic 18"* $7.95
- AR-NBA24 *Plastic 24"* $10.95
- **Aluminum T-squares** *offering hard tempered aluminum blade riveted to a rugged plastic head*
- AR-FR63-112 *Aluminum 12"* $10.95
- AR-FR63-118 *Aluminum 18"* $12.95
- AR-FR63-124 *Aluminum 24"* $13.95
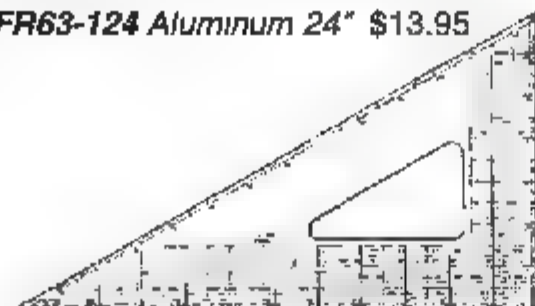
## TRIANGLES
*High quality triangles made of .080" acrylic. Raised inking edges. Great for Inkers.*
- **30" x 60"W/ Inking Edge**
- AR-1204-60 *Triangle 30"x60" 4 inch* $3.50
- AR-1206-60 *Triangle 30"x60" 6 inch* $4.50
- AR-1208-60 *Triangle 30"x60" 8 inch* $5.50
- AR-1210-60 *Triangle 30"x60" 10 inch* $6.50
- AR-1212-60 *Triangle 30" 60" 12 inch* $8.50
- **45" X 90"W/ Inking Edge**
- AR-1204-45 *Triangle 45"x90" 4 inch* $4.50
- AR-1206-45 *Triangle 45"x90" 6 inch* $5.50
- AR-1208-45 *Triangle 45"x90" 8 inch* $7.50
- AR-1210-45 *Triangle 45"x90" 10 inch* $9.50
- AR-1212-45 *Triangle 45"x90" 12 inch* $13.50

## COMPASS SET
*Geometry set includes ruler, compass, two triangles, protractor, eraser, and sharpener*
- **8-piece Geometry Set**
- AR-HX18807 $4.95
- **8-Piece Geometry Set** *(brass compass)*
- AR-723405 $7.95
- **Basic Geometry Set**
*4 piece Geometry Set (Ruler, 12" protractor, 30/60 + 45/90 triangles)*
- AR-FL03 $5.95
- **Basic Combination Compass**
*6-piece compass set: side-screw bow compass, knee joint compass, extension bar, spare leads, 2" divider point and a lead pointer.*
- AR-S61 *Set* $15.95
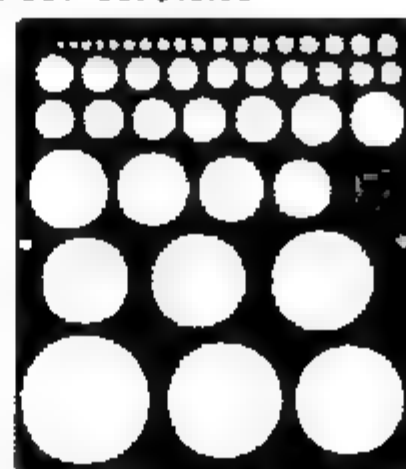
## CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES
- **Circle Templates**
*Metric and standard. Risers for smear-free drawing. (Great for Inkers)*
- **Large Circles**
- AR-13001 $7.95
- **Extra Large Circles**
- AR-13011 $6.95
- **French Curves (Inking Edge)**
- AR-9000 *Set* $6.95
- **Ellipse Temps.**
- AR-PK12691 $12.00

## DISPLAY PORTFOLIOS
- **ARTFOLIOS**
*24 pages of acid, pvc, and legnen safe art sleeves. Archival Safe.*
- AR-IA1212 *Artfolio Book 11 x 17 w/ 24 sheets* $15.95
*(Holds Blue Line Comic Book Art Boards)*
- AR-IA 1214 *Artfolio book 14 x 17 w/ 24 sheets* $25.95
*(Holds most oversized art boards)*
- **POCKET PORTFOLIO**
- AR-FL419WH *Pocket Portfolio 14 x 17* $10.50
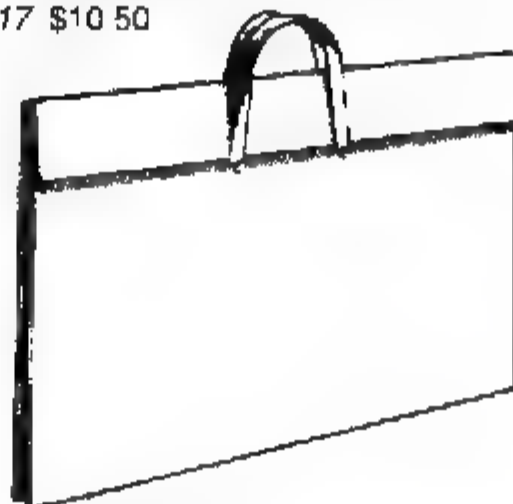
## STORAGE BOXES
- **Sketch Pac** *2-sided safe storing box 12 3/8" x 4 ¼" x 1 ¾"*
- AR-6880AB $12.95

- **One Tray Art Bins** *13" x 7 ¼" x5 ¾", Elevated tray for viewing of supplies in bottom bin. Tight Latch*
- AR-6843AC *black* $15.25

- **DRAFTSMAN BRUSH**
*Removes shavings from paper. Cleaning without fear of smudging.*
- **Draftsman Brush (cleaning paper)**
- AR-FT5391 $6.00

## XACTO KNIFE
*Rubberized barrel. Rear-release mechanism with safety cap.*
- **Xacto Knife**
- AR-XA3626 $5.25
*Xacto Refill Blades #1*
- AR-OLKB $6.50

- **WORKABLE FIXATIF** *(Krylon)*
*Provides lasting protection. Prevents smudging, dusting and wrinkling.*
- **Workable Fixatif**
- AR-KR1306 $8.95

## RUBBER CEMENT
*Contact adhesive for paste-up and other graphic art uses.*
- **Rubber Cement 4oz.**
- AR-BT138 $3.50
- **Rubber Cement Quart**
- AR-BT102 $13.25
- **Rubber Cement Thinner Pint**
- AR-BT201 $8.50
- **Rubber Cement Pick-Up (eraser)**
- AR-BT700 $1.50

## COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART SLEEVES
*Protect your original Art Work*
- **Comic Book Original Art Sleeves**
*11 ½" x 19" Polyethylene (3.0 mil.)*
- AR-BAG 1119-25 *25 Bags* $7.50
- AR-BAG 1119-100 *100 Bag* $25.00
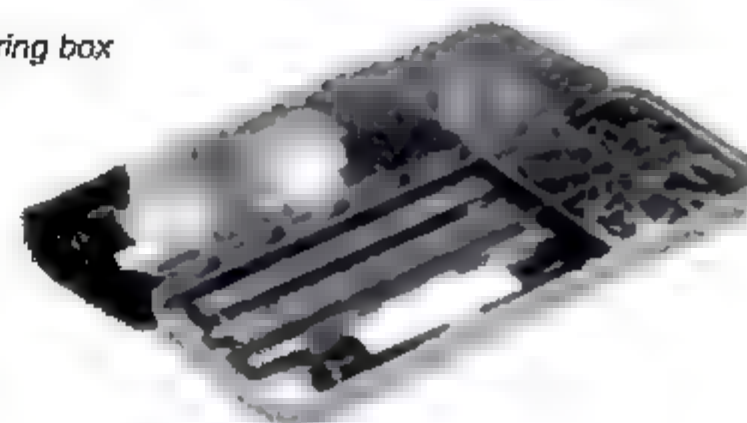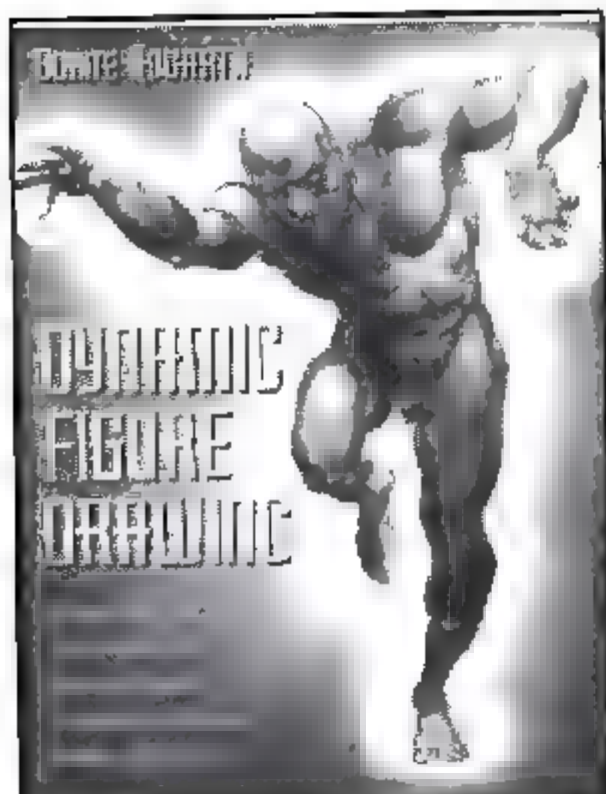
## DYNAMIC FIGURE DRAWING

By Burne Hogarth

Figure drawing is the most essential - and the most difficult - of all skills for the artist to learn. The hardest problem is to visualize the figure in the tremendous variety of poses which the body takes in action, poses which plunge the various forms for the body into deep space and show them in radical foreshortening.

ITEM# AB1001  *SRP $23.00*

176 pages. 8 1/2 x 11. Hundreds of drawings and diagrams.
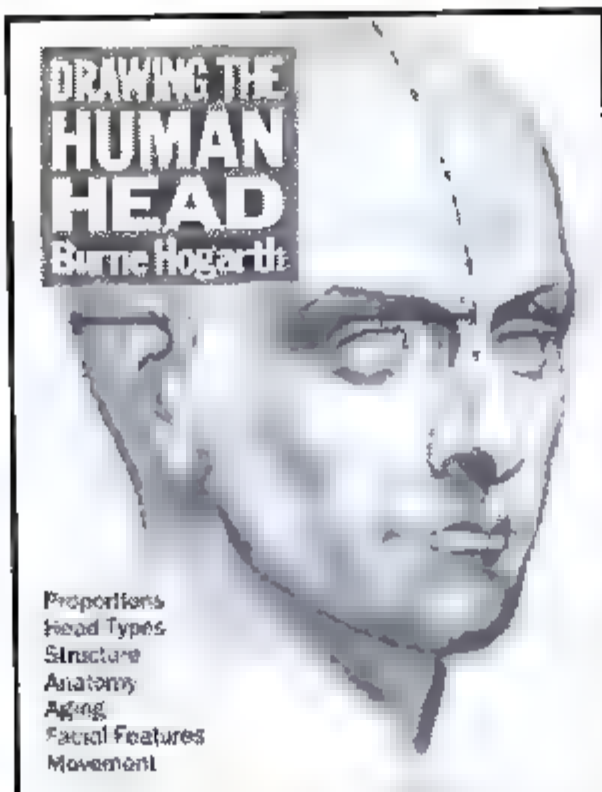
## DRAWING THE HUMAN HEAD

By Burne Hogarth

Drawing the Human Head represents a landmark in art instruction books. A comprehensive work on the human head, this outstanding handbook is so unique in concept and approach that no artist's library will be complete without it.

ITEM# AB1003  *SRP $19.75*

160 pages 8 1/2 x 11. Over 300 black and white illustrations.

## DYNAMIC WRINKLES AND DRAPERY

By Burne Hogarth

Through a series of extraordinary drawings and diagrams, Mr. Hogarth, famous for his wrinkles, folds, and drapery. His basic idea is that an accurate rendering of wrinkle patterns depends on understanding how the actions of a figure provoke any material.
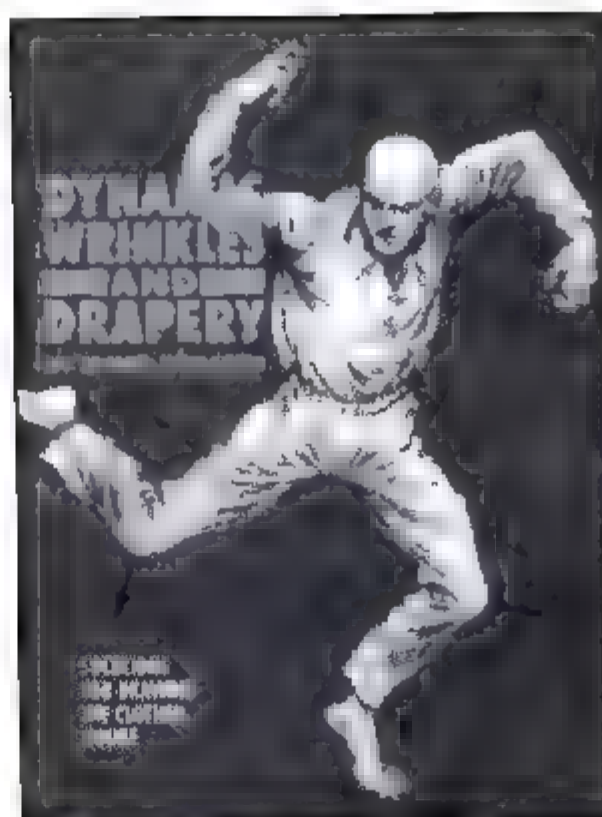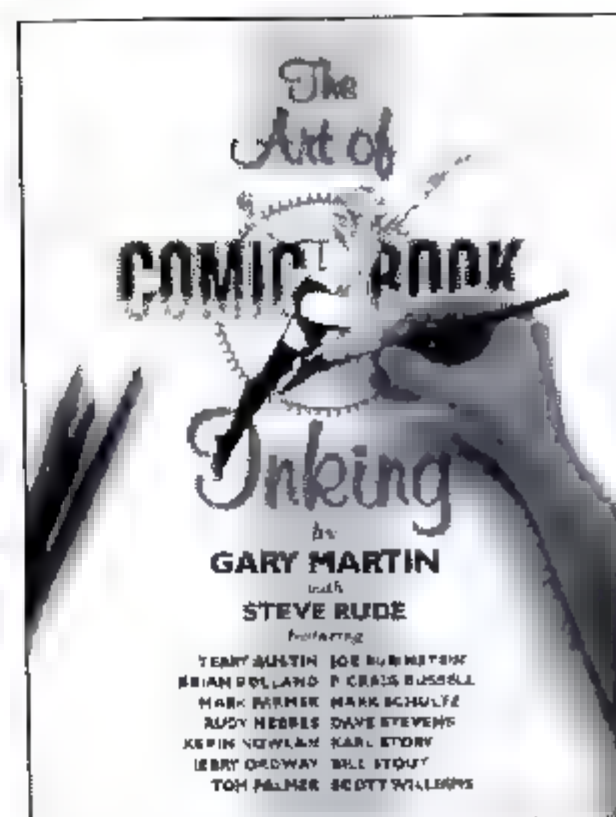
ITEM# AB1005 *SRP $26.00*

144 pages 8 1/4 x 11. over 150 two-color illustrations.

## THE ART OF COMIC BOOK INKING

by Gary Martin with Steve Rude

Tips from comics' greatest inkers! Tools of the trade! Brushes vs. pens! Feathering! Establishing a light source! Developing a style! Spotting blacks! Crosshatching!

For anyone interested in The Art of Comic-Book Inking.

ITEM# AB1008 *SRP $17.50*

112 pages. 8 1/4 x 11. Over 180 illustrations and diagrams

## DYNAMIC ANATOMY

By Burne Hogarth

Dynamic Anatomy presents a unique detailed study of the human figure as artistic anatomy.

By emphasizing the relationship of mass to movement and thus going far beyond the factual elements of anatomy, this fascinating book affords the reader sound practical methods for drawing human forms that come alive.

ITEM# AB1002 SRP *$22.25*

232 pages. 8 1/2 x 11. Over 300 two color drawings and diagrams. Bibliography. Index
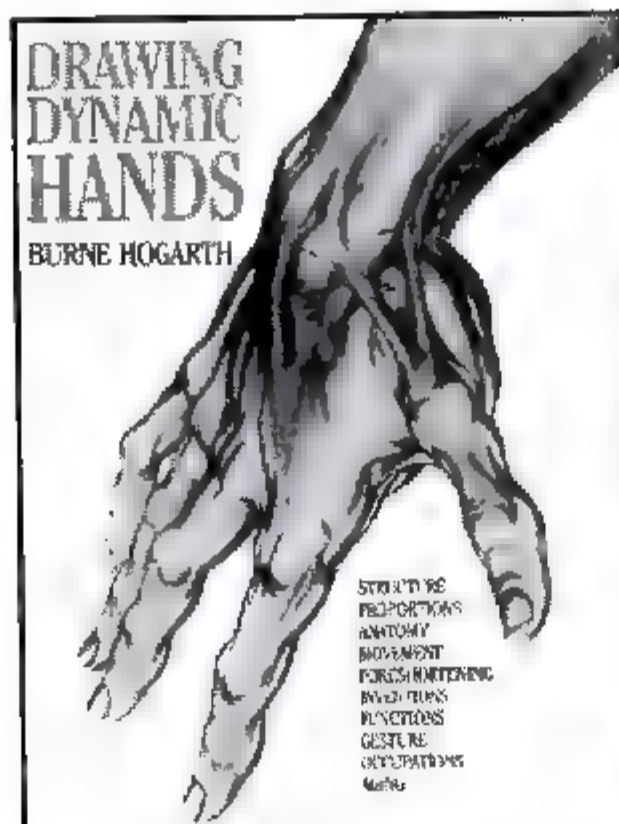
## DRAWING DYNAMIC HANDS

By Burne Hogarth

Drawing Dynamic Hands is one of the most challenging skills required of the artist who draws the human figure. Here, Burne Hogarth, master of the human form, presents the most comprehensive book ever published on drawing human hands.

ITEM# AB1004 *SRP $19.75*

144 pages. 8 1/4 x 11. Over 300 black and white illustrations.
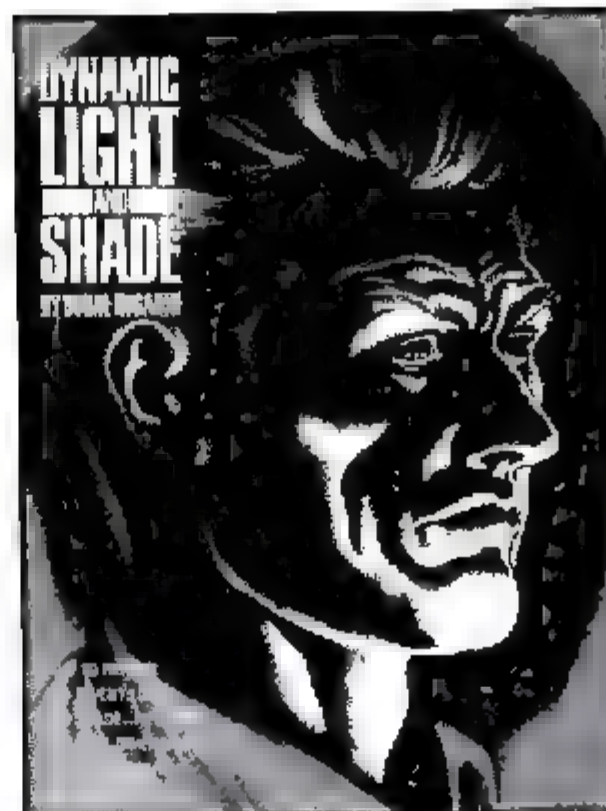
## DYNAMIC LIGHT AND SHADE

By Burne Hogarth

Mastery of light and shade-rendered with accuracy and expressive power-is the key to three-dimensional form in drawing and painting.

Hogarth begins with the simplest kind of light and shade, showing how a dark silhouette on white paper can communicate form and space

ITEM# AB1006 *SRP $19.75*

160 pages. 8 1/4 x 11. 224 black and white illustrations.

## DRAWING DYNAMIC COMICS

By Andy Smith

This fresh approach to drawing covers everything you need to create your own comic book page. Starting with lessons on form and structure, Andy moves on to building basic figures and setting them in motion, creating stylized characters, and adding backrounds to bring your scenes to life

ITEM#    AB1012    SRP    *$22.95*

144 pages. 8 1/2 by 11. Color illustrations

## POWERLINES

By Jim Calahan

From what's the best kind of paper to work on to the differences in pencils and what's expected from the artist to their editors, this initial volume of POWERLINES gets you pointed in the right direction. Even if you have no intention of starting your own superhero dynasty, it's a fascinating guidebook that teaches you what to look for in artistic excellence

ITEM# AB1009 SRP *$5.95*

44 pages. 6 1/2 by 10 Black and white illustrations

## HOW TO DRAW COMICS THE MARVEL WAY

By Stan Lee and John Buscema

Stan lee, the Mighty Man from Marvel, and John Buscema, active and adventuresome artist behind Spider-Man, Silver Surfer, Conan the Barbarian, and the Mighty Thor, have collaborated on this comics compendium

ITEM#   AB1010   SRP *$17.25*

160 pages  8 1/2 by 11.

Black and white illustration.
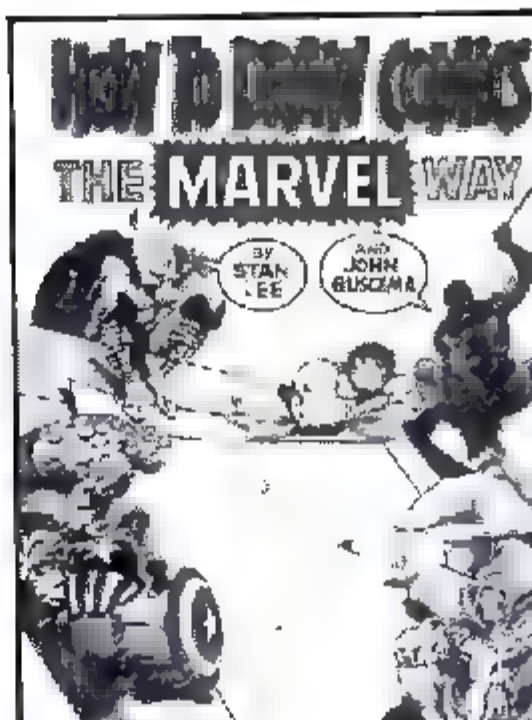
## SUPERHEROES

By Joe Kubert

Learn from legendary writer-illustrator Joe Kubert. Learn secrets of foreshortening, perpective, twist and tilt, and dimensionality. Super anatomy how to exaggerate muscles; how to draw hair, hands, and feet, how to get right proportions Why its crucial to develop your skills as a storyteller and how to do it. These concepts and more are all jammed packed in one book

ITEM# AB1011 SRP *$22.95*

144 pages 9 by 11 1/2 Color illustrations
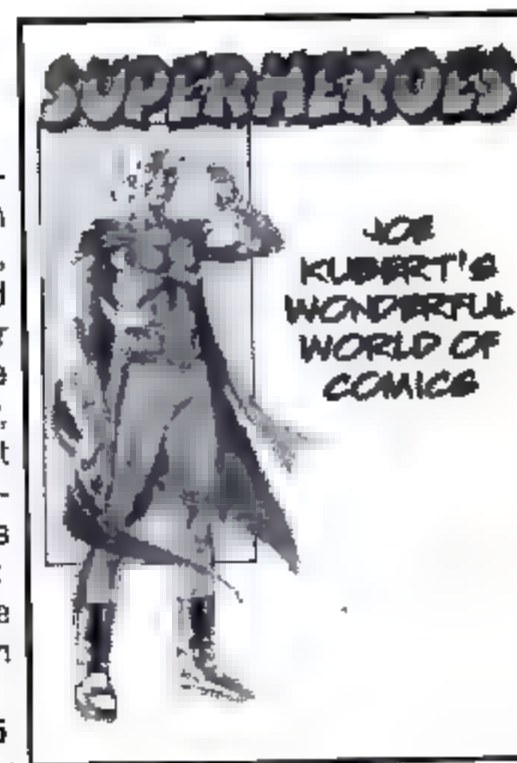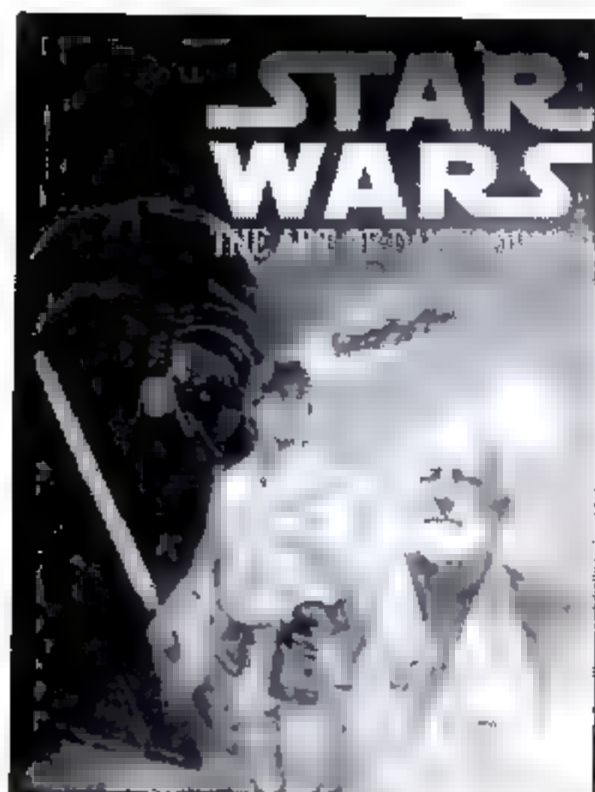
## STAR WARS THE ART OF DAVE DORMAN

by Dave Dorman and Lurene Haines
One of the most outstanding illustrator to come along in the past decade Dave Dorman has made his mark on the Star Wars saga. This book offers the most complete volume of Dave's Star Wars illustrations. Packed with paints, sketches and a very detailed how-to from "original design" to "completed painting" of this books cover.
- **Hardcover** with wrap around cover Signed and Numbered by Dave Dorman
**ITEM# AB1007H** *SRP $35.50*
- **Softcover** with a Autographed Book Plate (penciled drawing of books cover).
**ITEM# AB1007SA** *SRP $23.50*
128 pages. 9 x 11 Over 150 paintings, sketches and photos



## HOW TO DRAW MANGA

by Antarctic Press
A series of How-To-Draw-Manga guidebooks Ben Dunn, Fred Perry and many other artist from Antarctic Press continue to present a comprehensive guide to figure drawing in the manga style with lessons in anatomy, porportions, facial construction, expression on poses Issue #1 - 32 black and white pages.
**ITEM# AB1004** *SRP $4.95*



## DISNEY'S ANIMATION MAGIC

by Don Hahn
A step-by-step introduction to animated filmmaking from the producer of some of Disney's most beloved and celebrated animated films.
96 Full colored pages Hardcover.
**ITEM# AB1013** *SRP $19.96*

## VAPOR LOCH

By David (creator ob Kabuki) Mack, Created by Bob Hickey,
Written and illustrated by David Mack.
Adam Von Loch's quest for immortality guides him to unlock the secrets of vampirism When the son of Vlad Tepes, the original Count Dracula, finds this out he is none too happy, leading to an epic battle that you won't want to miss Fans of Mack's Kabuki will be delighted to see some of Dave s earliest work
**ITEM#CB1510 /Vapor Loch #1** *Signed by David Mack*
$8.00



Vapor Loch #1



StormQuest #1
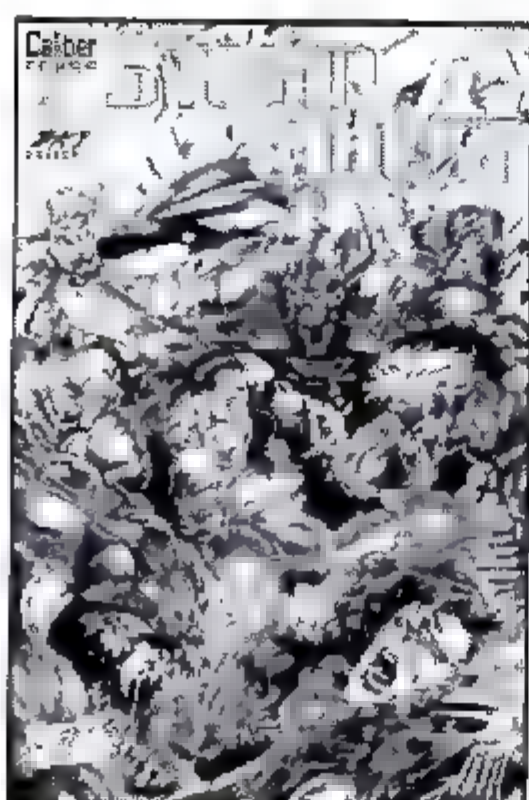


StormQuest #2



StormQuest #5



StormQuest #3



StormQuest #4



StormQuest Ashcan #1

## S T O R M Q U E S T

by Bob Hickey, Tom & Mary Bierbaum, Greg Land, Willie Peppers, Joe Martin and Bill Nichols
StormQuest tales the origin of the enigmatic Time-Storm, the major focal point of the Sacred Universe. When the storm erupts, a small group of people are immediately exposed and affected by theis strange energy, recognizing their potential, they come together to form STORMQUEST, a family-run troupe headed by a scientific couple They must now try to put everything back into place and undo the damage that their tragic mistake has caused. Beyond the limits of time in the realm of the gods and immortals, events are set into motion and the StormQuest team will become entangled with villains and allies pulled from the past and the future.
Created and co-plotted by Bob Hickey, written by Tom and Mary Bierbaum, illustrated by Greg Land and Willie Peppers. Each issue has 32 color pages.

| | |
|---|---|
| #CB1501/**StormQuest #1** | $2.00 |
| Rare. | |
| #CB1502 /**StormQuest #2** | $2.00 |
| #CB1503 /**StormQuest #3** | $2.00 |
| #CB1504 /**StormQuest #4** | $2.00 |
| #CB1505 /**StormQuest #5** | $2.00 |
| #CB1506 /**Storm Quest #6** | *Sold Out* |

**Ashcan**
Ashcans are 5½"x8½" black and white copies of a comic book.
#CB1507 /**StormQuest Ashcan #1**
$4.00

# BLOOD · ROSE TIME LORDS

Created by Bob Hickey

## BLOOD AND ROSES ADVENTURES
### Trade Paperback

Collects all four issues of the premiere Mini-Series, also includesover 50 pages of pin-ups, card art and other misc artwork...

Offering a new wrap around cover by Brad Gorby and Bob Hickey. 109 pages, B&W with a full-color cover.

**#CB1001 Blood & Roses Trade Paperback vol.1**
first printing ................. $12.95
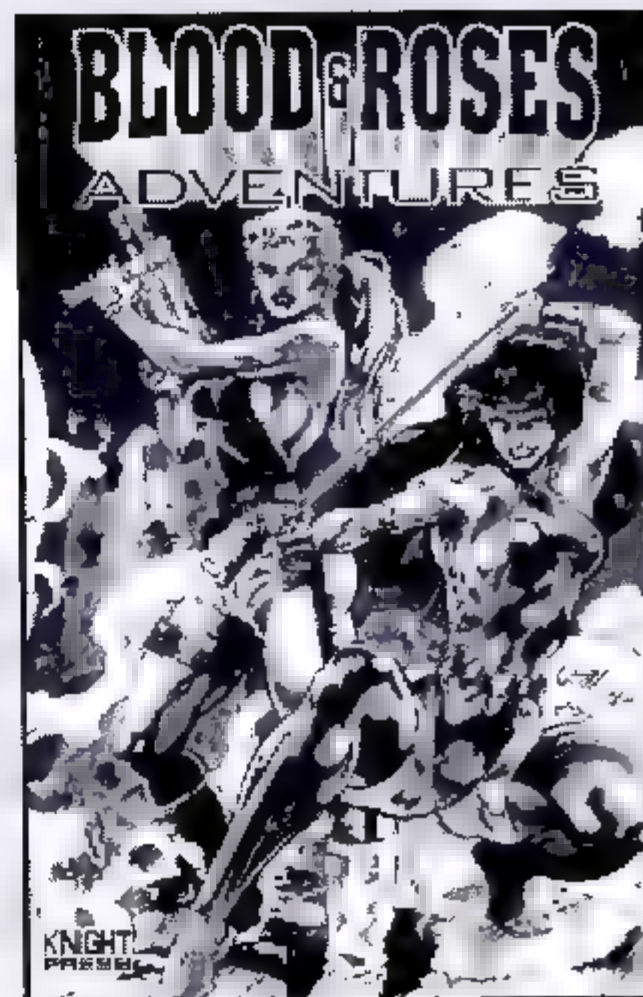
*B&R Adventures Trade Paperback vol. 1*

## BLOOD AND ROSES
### Future Past Tense

By Bob Hickey, Brad Gorby
Blood and Roses set the story for the entire Sky Universe. Thousand-year-old flaming skeletons, alien hunters, and dinosaurs are just a few of the problems that Christiana Blood and Tamara Rose have to deal with in this series.
Full Color 32 pages

#CB1002 /**B&R FPT#1** ................... $3.00
#CB1002g /**B&R FPT#1** Gold .......... $10.00
#CB1002gs /**B&R FPT#1** Gold signed $15.00
#CB1003 /**B&R FTP#2** ................... $3.00

*B&R Future Past Tense #1*

*B&R Future Past Tense #2*

## BLOOD AND ROSES
### Search for the Time Stone

by Hickey, Smith, Martin, Gonzales
Chris and Tam are thrown into the 70's disco era to fight of some Jive Turkeys. Then travel to England 523 A.D. to visit Camelot and retrieve the last time shard that will return time back to normal....or will it....and why do they keep popping up in the men's bathroom.
32 pages Black and White interior.
#CB1004 /**B&R S.T.S. #1** ............... $3.00
32 pages Black and Whited interior
#CB1005 /**B&R S.T.S. #2** ............... $3.00

*B&R Search for the Time Stone #1*

*B&R Search for the Time Stone #2*

# PARTS UNKNOWN

### By Beau Smith, Brad Gorby
Published by Image Comics packaged by Sacred Studios

Parts Unknown is the best homage to B-Movies ever to see print in a sequential art form. A group of reptilian-like aliens called the Scalons marking Earth their own turf. The Scalon's science department messed around with thier home planets atmosphere and killed off all of the females. That left the males of Scalon with two choices-- Either flip a coin to see sho wears the dress, or find another planet to conquer with better looking babes, ripe for starting a whole new race. You guessed it-- Earth was singled out as the Best Little Singles' Bar in the Universe. The lizard loverboys made a beeline, straight to Earth, lookin' for lust in all the wrong places. As in every alien invasion B-Movie, there are some good guys that figure it's up to them to save the world. That's where Pendelton Spurr and Maria Lucci Come in. They are law enforcement like the world has never seen. They cross every t with a left to the gut and dot every i with a pair of brass knuckles Spurr is Arnold, Stallone and Bruce Willis, All rolled into a huge, muscled package. Lucci is the most beautiful thing that has ever kicked your teeth out Together, they are the Pain Express-- Don't fight aliens without them.
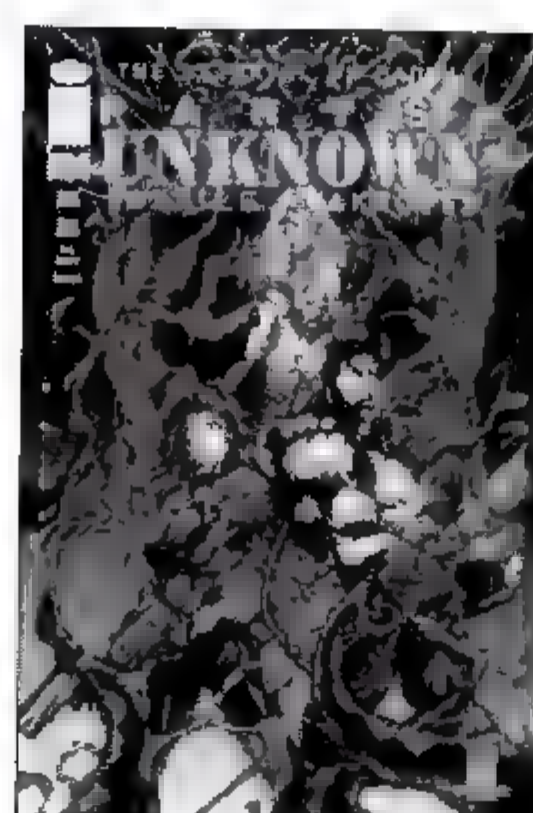


Parts Unknown Killing Attractions #1



Parts Unknown #1



Parts Unknown #2

## Parts Unknown

by Beau Smith and Brad Gorby
published by Image Comics

#CB2001 /**Parts Unknown:Killing Attractions #1** .......... $2.95
#CB2001S /**Parts Unknown :Killing Attractions #1**
signed by Beau Smith ... ....................... .. ............. $9.95

PU Killing Attractions is the "Ultimate" source book for Parts Unknown. With never before published artwork, Character bios directly from Parts Unknown creator Beau Smith, to storyboard layouts and animation designs. A must have for any Parts fan

#CB2002 /**Parts Unknown #1** ............................................. $2.95
#CB2002S /**Parts Unknown #1**
signed by Beau Smith , ...................... . . .................. . $9.95

Parts Unknown #1 cover was illustrated by Dwayne Turner.

#CB2003 /**Parts Unknown #2** ............................................. $2.95
#CB2003S /**Parts Unknown #2**
signed by Beau Smith .... .......... .................... ... ... .... $9.95

Parts Unknown #2 cover was illustrated by Scot Eaton and Danny Miki.

#CB2004 /**Parts Unknown #3** ............................................. $2.95
#CB2004S /**Parts Unknown #3**
signed by Beau Smith ........ .. ...................... ..............; .......... $9.95

Parts Unknown #3 cover was illustrated by Flint Henry.

#CB2005 /**Parts Unknown #4** ........................................ $2.95
#CB2005S /**Parts Unknown #4**
signed by Beau Smith ............. ...................... .. .. ... ..... $9.95

Parts Unknown #4 cover was illustrated by Nat Jones.



Parts Unknown #3



Parts Unknown #4

## Parts Unknown Hard Cover Collection vol. 1

by Beau Smith and Brad Gorby

Collecting the first four issues originally printed by Eclipse comics. This volume goes back to the beginning before the Scalons had any corporate contacts and were just one step up on the evolutionary ladder from Godzilla though they were still after Earths' women and doing deadly experiments on people. Original collected by Knight Press, 110 pages and b&w with a color wrap around cover.

Blue Line Pro has collected less then a hundred remaining trade paperbacks and created these Limited Edition Hard Cover Collection. Each collection is signed by creator Beau Smith

#CB2006S ... ........ ...... ........ ............ ...... .. ... ... $34.95
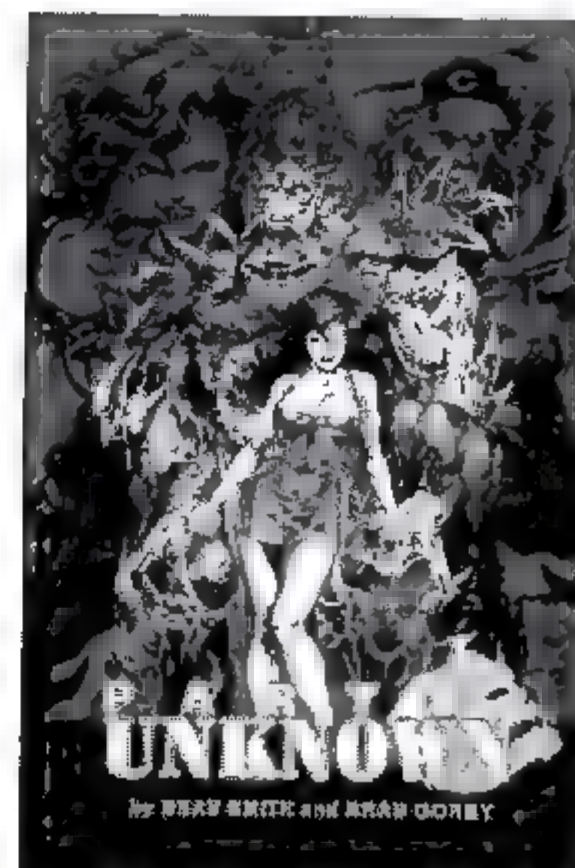


Parts Unknown Hard Cover Collection vol. 1

# MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

SMBLCATV1N6

| ITEM NUMBER | QTY | DESCRIPTION | PRICE | 15%Discount CLUB PRICE | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | SUB TOTAL | | |

**TAX** Non-Kentucky residents do not need to add tax. Kentucky residents add 6%

**SHIPPING AND HANDLING**

**Domestic United States-** Orders under $45, add $6 for U.P.S. or add $7.00 for U.S. Mail
Over $45, add 15% of order
Orders sent to Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico ship US Mail and may take 2-3 weeks longer to arrive.
**Canadian & International-** Call or E-Mail for Shipping Charges
*SHIPPING IS INCLUDED IN SUBSCRIPTION TO SKETCH MAGAZINE, BUT NOT IN BACK ISSUES OR ANY OTHER PRODUCTS*

SKETCH MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION 6-ISSUE $35.70 U.S.
CANADA & MEXICO $49.00
[No Shipping Charge when ordering a Sketch Magazine Subscription only.] FOREIGN $98.00

sub total + tax + shipping & handling + membership = grand total

☐ U.P.S. ☐ U.S. MAIL

**Sold to:** (CARD HOLDER)

name

address

city | state | country | zip/postal code

daytime phone | daytime fax

**ship to (if different than sold to):**

name

address

city | state | country | zip/postal code

daytime phone | daytime fax

**Charge to my** ☐ Visa ☐ Matercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover ☐ check/money order enclosed

credit card number | exp. date | check amount

authorized signature (required) | check number

credit card bank of issue | date

I AGREE TO PAY ABOVE TOTAL AMOUNT ACCORDING TO CARD ISSUER AGREEMENT

---

**Send to:**
**BLUE LINE PRO**
**Attn: Order Dept. SK6**
**8385-A U.S. Highway 42**
**P.O. BOX 6426,**
**Florence, KY 41022-6426**
**Phone:(859)282-0096**
**Fax: (859) 282-9412**

**ORDERING:**
Please be sure that all necessary details are included: quantity; item number and description

**BACKORDERS:**
In general, any item not in stock at time of shipment will be backordered, unless customer specifically requests to be on a permanent "no-backorder" basis. Freight terms of original shipment will apply.

**UNDER PAYMENTS:**
When possible, we short ship to compensate for underpayment. If it is not possible to ship, we will write you for the Balance Due and hold order until the balance is received in full.
**Please be sure to read order form carefully for charges that might apply to your order.**

**PRICES:**
All prices are subject to change without notice. Please fee free to request a quote for current prices.

**PAYMENT METHOD:**
Check, Money Order or Credit Card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express Cards, Discover Card, Novus Cards)

**FREIGHT TERMS:**
In general all orders will be shipped per paid and the freight amount will be added to your invoice. We will ship by truck line or UPS, if it is less expensive than a parcel service. Free Freight on $300.00 or more.

**SPECIAL ORDERS:**
We will sale art paper in bulk quantities, customizing is available also.

**CLAIMS:**
Discrepancies between packing list and goods actually received must be reported within 10 days. Beyond this point, claims become extremely difficult to investigate and resolve.
Shipments will be made by the most satisfactory method in our judgment, unless particular shipping instructions are specified. Great care is used in packing all orders. Our responsibility ends, however, when the shipment is delivered to the carrier and accordingly, we are not liable for goods damaged or lost in transit. All claims, therefore should be filed with the carrier. We will gladly assist in substantiating such claims.

**RETURNS:**
We'll gladly accept returns provided goods are in resalable condition, listed in catalog and are received within 30 days of ship date. Returns must be previously authorized by our office. We are sorry but no returns can be accepted under any other conditions. Returned goods will be subject to a 20% restocking charge. Items not in resalable condition may be refused or incur an additional service charge. Returns are for merchandise credit only.

**GIFT CERTIFICATES:**
We offer Gift Certificates in increments of $5.00 ($5.00, $10.00, $15.00, etc.) These are a great way to give a creative gift to someone.

**SKETCH MAGAZINE GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS**
A gift that give the whole year! The trade magazine for comic book creators. Sketch offers valuable information for comic book creators new and established. Sketch is filed with many "How To's." articles from writing, penciling and inking to packaging, promotions and distribution. Features on lettering, coloring and many other aspects of creating comic books all by creators working in the comic book industry. Each issue spotlights a creator that is successfully working in the industry. An arena for creators and publishers to meet.
Call for more information and savings.

# SKETCH MAGAZINE • BACK ISSUES • CLUB BLUE MEMBERSHIP

Attention Sketch Magazine readers! Here's you chance to build a valuable library of comic book creative reference materials and fill in the gaps of your own Sketch archives. Each issue is a timeless source of useful material and inspiring artwork for the comic book enthusiast. Sketch offers an endless volume of information for creators to refer to time and again. Take a look at what you've been missing.
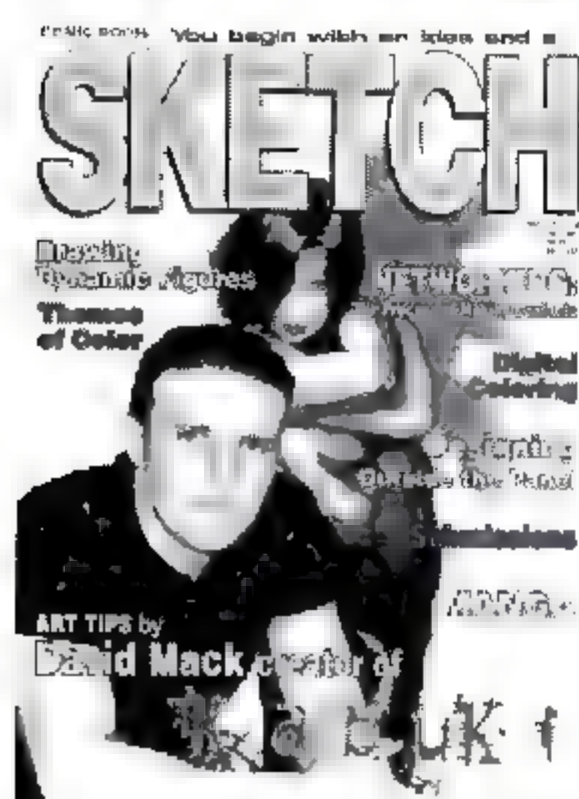
SK1001- Issue #1 **SOLD OUT**

SK1002- Issue #2 $5.95
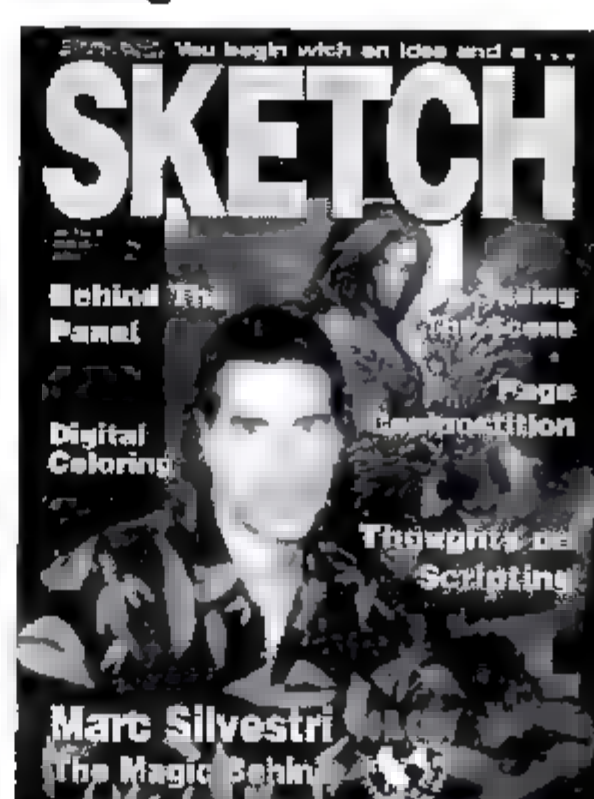
SK1003- Issue #3 $5.95
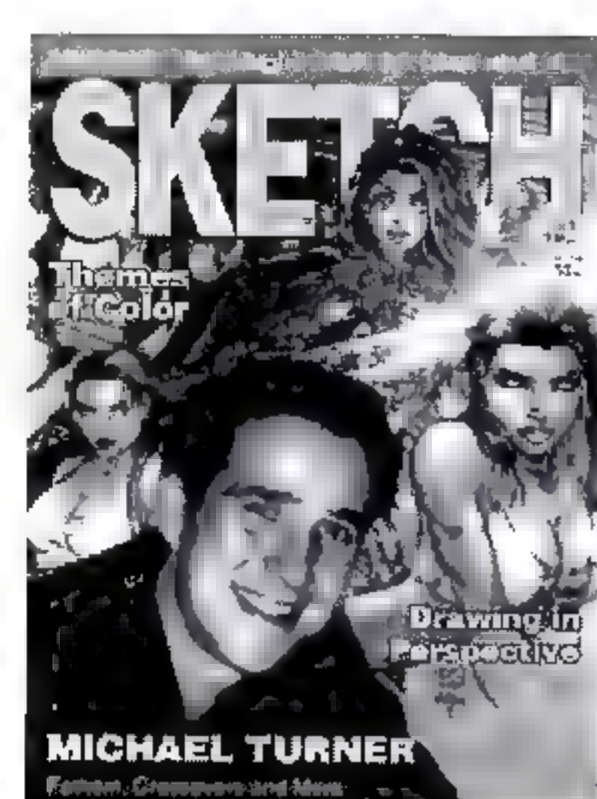
SK1004- Issue #4 $5.95

SK1005- Issue #5 $5.95

SK1006- Issue #6 $5.95

Sketch Magazine provides valuable information for comic book creators, including tips on writing, penciling, inking, lettering, computer coloring, marketing and other technical aspects of the comic profession.

NEXT ISSUE... SK1007- Issue #7

## SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE!!!

## APE 2001
February 17 and 18, 2001, The Alternative Press Expo, Herbst Pavilion at Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA, WWW.COMIC-CON.ORG

## Big Apple Con
January 20th, 2001 New York, NY in the St Paul's Church Auditorium. Contact: WWW.BIGAPPLECON>COM Big Apple Comic Conventions, 74-05 Metropolitan Ave. Second Floor, Middle Village, NY 11373  718-326-2713 l contact@ba2k.net.

## Big Easy Comic-Con
May 25-27, 2001 New Orleans, LA. Organized by Contact: R.A.P. Productions PO Box 3831, Mansfield, OH 44907-1427, Roger Price, Ph. (419) 526-1427, Fax. (603) 250-9252,  Email. BIGEASYCON@WFCOMICS.COM Website. WWW.BIGEASYCON.COM .

## San Diego Comic Com International
July 19-22, 2001 at the San Diego Convention Center, San Diego CA. Contact Fae Desmond. Comic-Con International P.O. Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. Ph. (619) 544-9555, Fax. (619) 544-0743, E-mail. CCIWEB@AOL.COM , Website. WWW.COMIC-CON.ORG

## The EXPO 2001
Holiday Inn Select, Bethesda, Maryland September 14th through the 16th, 2001 Fri: 3:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Sat: 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Sun. 9.00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. (Small Press Summit) website: www.spxpo.com

## Dragon Con
Friday August 31st though Monday September 3rd, 2001 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta and Atlanta Marriott Marquis, GA. Contact Ed Krammer, P.O. Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696, Ph. (770) 925-0115, Fax. (770) 623-6321, E-mail. EDKRAMER@AOL.COM, Website. WWW.DRAGONCON.ORG

## Heroes Convention
June 8-10, 2001, Charlotte Convention Center, contact. Heroes Convention 2001, P.O. Box 9181 Charlotte, NC 28299 phone: 704-375-7463. WWW.HEROESONLINE.COM.

## Los Angeles Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention
Dec 10th , Shrine Auditorium Expo Center, 700 West 32nd. Contact Bruce Schwartz at 818-954-8432 or check their web site www.comicbookscifi.com

## Mega Con
March 2-4, 2001 at Orlando FL, Contact Beth Widera, Mega Con, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677, Ph. (813) 891-1702, Fax. (813) 891-0542, E-mail. megacon2000@megaconvention.com , Website. www.megaconvention.com.

## Mid-Ohio-Con,
November 24-25 2001 at Hilton at Easton Town Center Columbus OH, Contact Roger Price, R.A.P. Productions, P.O. Box 3831, Mansfield, OH 44907-3831, Ph (419) 526-1427, Fax. (603) 250-9252, E-mail. MIDOHIOCON@WFCOMICS.COM, Website. WWW.MIDOHIOCON.COM

## Moto City Conventions
Chicago Comicfest-March 31-April 1 2001, Ramada Plaza Hotel O'Hare
Motor City Comic Con-May 18-20 2001, Novi expo Center, Novi, MI
Southeast Trade & Retail Symposium-August 30, Atlanta, GA. Contact Motor City Conventions INC., 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd., Suite 231 Southfie d, MI 48076 Phone: 248-426-8059 Fax: 248-426-8064.

## Pittsburgh Comicon
April 27th, 28th, and 29th 2001, Pittsburgh Expomart, Monroeville, PA Contact: Michael & Renee George 1002 Graham Ave., Windber, PA 15963 PHONE: (814) 467-4116; FAX: (814) 467-4416 website: www.pittsburghcomicon.com

## Planet Comicon III
Saturday, March 25, 10am-5pm Sunday, March 26, 10am-4pm Overland Park International Trade Center 115th & Metcalf, Overland Park, KSAdmission $10/Day, $12/2-day pass, $5/ kids ages 6-14, under 6 free. Website: www.planetcomicon.com

## S.P.A.C.E.
Small Press and Alternative Comics Expo 2001. An Exhibition of Small Press, Alternative, and Creator-Owned Comics Saturday March 31, 2001 Rhodes Center at The Ohio Expo Center  Columbus, Ohio website: members.ao .com/ BackPorchC/space.html. Contact Back Porch Comics c/o Bob Corby 2940 Royalwood Dr. Dublin OH 43017-1904.

## Wizard of the Coast Conventions
Winter Fantasy-January 25-28, Fort Wayne, IN
Origins- July 5-8, Columbus, OH
Gen Con- August 2-5, Milwaukee, WI
Contact WotC, P.O. Box 1740, Renton, WA 98057-1740 phone: 800-529-EXPO website: www.wizards.com/conventions .

## Wizard World Chicago 2001
August 17-19, 2001 at the Rosemont Expo Center in suburban Chicago. Contact: Brenda Cook 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920, ph. (914) 268-8068, fax (914) 268-8069. Website: www.wizardwor d.com

## WonderCon
April 20-22 2001, Oakland Convention Center, San Francisco Bay Area Contact: WonderCon, 2991 Shattuck Ave., #202, Berkeley, CA 94705 phone: 925 825-5410 website: www.wondercon.com

> Send your convention information to:
> Sketch Magazine
> 8385 U.S. Highway 42, Florence, KY 41042
> or  e-mail to: skconvent ons@blue inepro.com

# CLASSIFIEDS

Sketch Magazine, the comic book industries magazine, announces that every classified word ad placed in this publication will appear on the Sketch Magazine website at www.bluelinepro.com. In addition to reaching your target audience through Sketch Magazine, your ads will also reach thousands more on the World Wide Web!

Classified advertising are 25¢ per word, with a $4.00 minimum. Any space between letters begins a new word.

### Classified Display Advertising.

| Size | 1x | 3x | 6x |
|---|---|---|---|
| Two inches | $96.00 | $92.00 | $87.00 |
| Three inches | $169.00 | $161.00 | $153.00 |
| Four inches | $198.00 | $188.00 | $179.00 |

### Classifications to choose from

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | Announcements | 2050 | Inker Wanted |
| 2005 | Artist Wanted | 2055 | Letterers |
| 2010 | Art Supplies | 2060 | Miscellaneous |
| 2015 | Associations | 2065 | Original Artwork |
| 2020 | Books For Sale | 2070 | Penciler Wanted |
| 2025 | Books Wanted | 2075 | Printers |
| 2030 | Colorist | 2080 | Professional Services |
| 2035 | Color Separations | 2085 | Publishers |
| 2040 | Comics For Sale | 2090 | Services |
| 2045 | Comics Wanted | 2095 | Shows & Conventions |

## ANNOUNCEMENTS 2000

**CHRISTIAN COMICS** International, a web site with links, FAQ, features, and an on line catalog! Visit today http://users.aol.com/chricom. Rox35 Media, Inc. P.O. Box 27470, Albuquerque, NM 87125 e-mail cci@rox35.org

**ARTIST For Hire** contact Robert Clyder Allen PO Box 488 Spencer NC 28159 rca-artist61@yahoo.com

**VISIT Autodestruct Studios** Original Web Comics Featuring James Daly (Marvel Comics), Paul Richards (Duke Nukem Forever), and Mike Meister (Unchained) www.autodestruct.com

**THE EDGE STUDIOS,** self-published comics, a new creator owned company, black/white comics printed, for more information: harms@arn.net

**WRITERS/ETC.** Need People for a new company. Send submissions and S.A.S.E to SLYM STUDIOS 432 Wilson Topeka, Ks 66616-1152

**ANNOUNCING** the opening of a new comic website Comic Raiders featuring special edition comics, toys, and collectible Got to www.comicraiders.com

**MAVERIC COMICS** STUDIOS INC. Joseph Gilbert Thompson is open for business 6142 Torresdale Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19135-3718 Onward, Upward Forever!

**NUQUEST COMICS** ARE COMING!! Revolutionary, action-packed titles of all genres: 'Tekne VI', 'Trigger', 'Savior', 'EDC 319'. The Quest Has Begun. www.nuquestcomics.com

**SMALL PRESS** Big Issues Crazee Comics are diving into shark in shark infested waters . Come see what the hype is all about www.crazeecomics.com

## ARTIST WANTED 2005

"WRITER/INKER looking for Penciler/Publisher to create comics with/for. A little pro experience looking for more exposure. Please contact me." Richard Gutierrez http //fearstalker.tripod.com/richard.html FearStalkerX@aol.com

## ARTISTS WANTED NOW

**ARTISTS WANTED NOW** for new comic series Mad Beanz!, a new adventure comedy series that will start next year Artists who participate in the project will be given a large percentage of profits and exposure. No experience required. Just take the Mad Beanz art test online at: www.victorian.fortunecity.com/lexington/613/arttests.htm or write to. Smorgasbord Productions, P.O. Box 1384, La Mesa CA 91944.. Also be sure to check out www.smorgasbordproductions.com.

**VINSON WATSON** is back! Check out Studio Archein at http://reationcomics.webjump.com or http://www.jps/artstar/reaction. We still need finishing artist!

**PENCILERS AND INKERS** needed for new titles in development at October Comics Photorealistic anima., superhero, and manga styles needed. Send samples to October Comics, PO Box 2270, Schiller Park, IL 60176. OctoberCmc@aol.com.

**INDEPENDENCE ENT.** Looking for writers Inkers Pencilers with or without exp. Contact Aaron Killien 407 870 5973 leave message!

## ART SUPPLIES 2010

**COPIC MARKERS**, COPIC SKETCH, and mult.liners now available in North America. Popular among manga artists in Japan. Telephone (542) 684-0013

## BOOK FOR SALE 2020

**DON'T MUF OUT** order Pa ph Berryl Only $3 from A.W O.L Press, 1211 Stillmeadow Place Apt 2C. Fredrick MD 21703.

## BUSINESS CONSULTANT 2028

**COPYRIGHT CONSULTANTS:** Protecting the rights of writers, artists and the creative community 5632 Van Nuys Blvd. #337-B, Van Nuys CA 91401, 818-693-6757. Citwil@primenet.com http://www.promenet.com/~citwil. Parent Company, Except ons Enterprises, has available writers, pencilers, inkers,; also PR and web design.

## COMICS FOR SALE 2040

**KABUKI For a FREE** checklist of Kabuki back issues and ordering information please send your request to: ANH TRAN, PO BOX 19294, Cincinnati, OH 45219-0294. Email: ANH2TRAN@HOTMAIL.COM Also check out NOHTV.COM for the latest Kabuki news, message boards and links.

**SPAWN MAGS** 1-72 for sale Excellent Condition $140.00 cover price. Contact Charles Maxwell Jr. (727) 866-2920

## LETTERERS 2055

**COMIC BOOK** lettering that's fast, affordable and experienced. Visit http://www.cueballproductions.webjump.com or emai cueprod@aol.com Cueball Productions: For all your lettering needs. Michael Thomas 1309 NE 24th Portland, OR 97232 (503) 284-5288.

## MISCELLANEOUS 2060

SACREDRACER@SACREDSTUDIOS.COM See our comic book related auctions on Ebay.com

**Talent Search**, Artist, writers, colorist, letters. Looking for creative people. Maveric Comics Studio Inc. 6142 Torredale Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19136-3718

**ARTIST/CREATOR** interested in sharing ideas and networking. Non-Schooled Non-Published newbie looking for exposure. Contact Gareth Hyde 11418 N. 24th Dr Phoenix, Az 85029 Zaneparents@aol.com

**AIRWAVE CRASH** Need Lyrics, Chords, Tapes Contact: Anthony Russ 317-925-2087 Indianapolis, In.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 2080

**PROFESSIONAL COMPUTER** illustrator available, capable of total package; line, ink, and color. Reasonably priced. Cartoon and Realistic styles Strength in Humor. Contact Tim Petty (909)-734-1086 or email at scarus@thegrid.net

**INKER,** Professionally Trained, Looking for work (Wide Variety of style). For samples contact: Russell Jackson (253)-856-7414

## SERVICES 2090

**CARTOONIST FOR HIRE.** Greeting cards, children's books, one panel gags Webpage http://go.to/clotcomx oremail: carte blanche@hotmail.com

**ILLUSTRATOR** Looking for creative team or company must be serious minded and professional. Only send inquires by mail Jeffery Gilmore 915 Fair Banks Ave. Cincinnati OH 45205-1807 (513) 251-0733

## WORK WANTED 2195

**INKER, KUBERT School** trained, seeking position. For samples contact Vic Miller, Sr. E-mail: vjmillersr@hotmail.com, Phone. 856-933-7048

**CARICATURES** for any Humor Project. Samples available. Call Steve Nyman 973-586-0790

**S.V.A. GRADUATE** looking for work as an inker For samples of my stuff please write to: Tony Marin, 30-25-47th, Astoria, NY 11103 ph. 718-626-

**ATTENTION:** Artist Oozing with raw talent. Very Creative with mind to rock Industry. Contact John Frank Grigalunas IV 5825 South Menard Chicago IL 60638

**WANT YOUR BOOK** to kick ass? Contact Tom at 48 Columbine Ave. Islip, NY 11751 or marv@optonline.net for samples.

**PENCILLER,** inker looking for position to gain experience. Will work for royalties. Email: Usagent@earthlink.net for quick response

**IF YOU HAVE** a story to tell with an ancient high tech look then I'm your artist hands down. Contact Warren Faison Jr. (215) 229-4411 or Email MrAquarius0205@aol.com.

**COMIC BOOK COVER** ARTIST + Amateur Illustrator wanting to draw comics for publisher. Contact Roger Shepard P.O. Box 34863 Richmond, VA 23234 (804) 732-1136

**CARICATURIST** available to work through the mail. 20 plus years experience, member of the National Caricaturist Network. Call Kent Roberts (717) 530-1056 or e-mail Caricaturist@webTV net

*Are you a Club Blue Member?*
*Then you have a*

**FREE** Classified
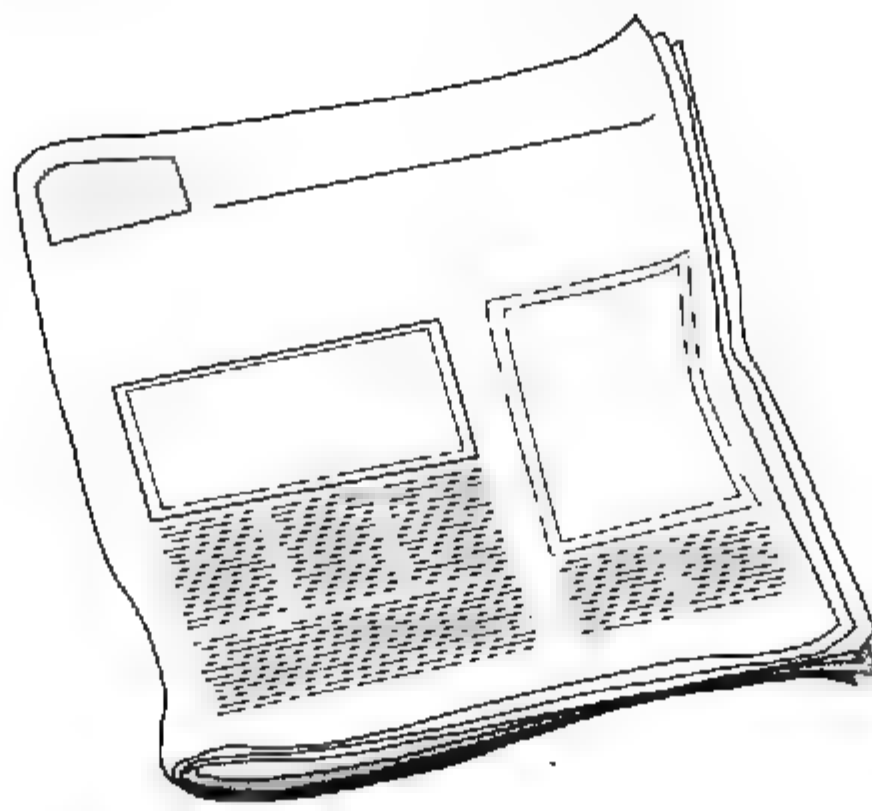
# Mask Media:
# YOU ARE AN EXPERT!

by Clint McElroy

You are an expert.

What's that? People don't think of you as an expert? They think of you as that less-than-hygienic flake drawing super-heroes or writing funny book stories in your parents' attic? Even worse, you ARE a less-than-hygienic flake drawing super-heroes or writing funny book stories in your parents' attic?

Well, don't you worry your pretty little head because I'm here to transform you into... "an expert". I'm Professor Harold Hill, and— Oh, sorry. I have to stop watching those old musicals on Turner Classic Movies.

All kidding aside (for now, anyway), you may be wondering why you should BE an expert. What we are talking about here is "marketing", whether it be marketing yourself in your local community or in the international arena, the principles are the same. The result of effective marketing is publicity, and there's no publicity like FREE publicity In addition, being an expert will give you many opportunities to flesh out that press book and/or video reel, which you should be doing anyway (but that's another column).

I remember a consultant once telling me: "Perception is reality. If they perceive you as an expert, then you ARE one." Then he pocketed our company's check for $15,000 and we never saw him again.

How will all this help you find work? I have no idea.

But it's just another weapon in your arsenal, just another advantage to have on your side. In this wacky, kooky world of comics, you never know where an opportunity will come from. For instance, a local television station interviewed me when the first Batman movie came out. In the interview I mentioned other comic books that would translate nicely to film and the terrific job being done by the editors of those books. The next time I sent a submission to one of those editors, I included a copy of the video from that interview and before you could say "cheesy rump-kissing brown-nose", I was scripting an issue of that editor's book.

I'll pause a moment for those of you who thought all comic book work was assigned solely on talent and creativity.. .. .

There now, heart rate back to normal? Breathing restored? Then lets get to work.

The beauty of all this is the fact that you are ALREADY an expert. You are an expert in the field of comic books. You are a panelologist, if you will. Just don't use that word around other comics professionals or they might de-pants you. But whether you are an established pro or someone just starting out, you have expertise that can be turned into a commodity, if you're willing to work it.

Being an expert will make you a news source. More often than you think, comics pop up in the news. Local TV news people are ALWAYS looking for story angles and that means you can be the talking head on the six o'clock news. The next time someone bases a movie on a comic book ("X-Men II: Toad Gets Lucky") or a momentous comics event takes place, worthy of national attention (Superman dies and Stan Lee killed him) or something in the comic book industry itself causes controversy (Marilyn Manson shows up at Riverdale High, claiming to be the father of Betty and Veronica's illegitimate babies) you need to be the person the local news folks call for an interview

First, find out the names of the Assignment Editors at your local television stations. Not the News Director, or Reporter, or Anchor. It's the Assignment Editor that makes most of the decisions about how stories are covered and who gets interviewed. Send that Assignment Editor a resume, some samples of your work, and a cover letter. In that letter talk about the projects you've worked on, the people you've worked with, and volunteer your YEARS of experience to them, to be used any time a story comes up dealing with "Illustrated Fiction" (another term that might get you de-pantsed in certain circles).

Make sure that Assignment Editor knows you are available any time they need a comment Give them your home number, office number, cell phone number, beeper number, the location of the coop where you keep your carrier pigeons, ANYWAY that exists to communicate with you. Somewhere in this packet of information, attach a business card, or better yet, one of those pre-printed Rolodex cards with all your information on it. The next time a story crosses their desk that has anything to do with comics, they flip through the Rolodex...and there you are ...their "expert".

You can also hedge your bets by making yourself known to the news producers, sometimes known as cinematographers, sometimes known as the person who lugs the camera when they interview you. Send copies of your stuff to the newsroom, along with a cover letter explaining how you would like their on-staff reviewer to give it consideration.

Odds are a hundred-to-one that they have an on-staff reviewer, and about ten-thousand to one that they have an on-staff reviewer of comic books, but trust me, your comics will find their way into the hands of the comic book fans on staff at the TV station. Every station has one or two. Don't ask me why, I think its some kind of government quota thing.

Television stations are required by law to air a certain amount of public affairs programming, which is where a lot of your early-morning talk and news shows come from. Find out who produces those shows and put them on your mailing list as well.

Some TV stations produce special news programs aimed at young people. Here in this area one of the stations produced a show called "KidsMag", which had regular weekly features on comics. The producer of this show should become one of your best buds as well.

I have also had success using these same techniques when making out-of-town appearances.

Let's say you are going to be a guest at a comic book convention. There you'll be one of the many people sitting at a tiny table, sandwiched in between a guy who draws demons bursting out of people chests, and the old guy who used to letter Super-Turtle for DC. You will be sitting there, providing a face to distract all those people lined up to get their pictures taken with the voluptuous blond in the lycra body suit at the www.pneumaticwomancomics.com table.

How cool would it be if a local TV news crew showed up, asked con security where you were sitting, because YOU did a little homework, YOU found out the assignment editor's name at the TV station, and YOU volunteered to be interviewed if they decided to do a story on the big convention in their town Even Pneumatic Woman might be checking you out.

These same basic principles also lend themselves to garnering newspaper coverage. Just substitute "Features Editor" for "Assignment Editor", and follow the same game plan. The "trickle-down" principle also applies here. Send them your stuff for review and it will end up in the possession of a comic book fan on staff.

Take that a step further. Contact that features editor and volunteer to write comic book reviews for them. You never know, they may go for it.

After all You ARE an expert.

Clint McElroy

# &lt;html&gt;
# &lt;head&gt;
## &lt;title&gt;**Web Page Design**&lt;/title&gt;
# &lt;/head&gt;

-terri boyle

There are more than 60 million Web sites today. While I'm not going to teach you complex HTML coding, I am going to steer you in the right direction in setting up a web page and marking your territory on the web. I'll give you a quick run down on some coding terms for HTML, and go over the Do's and Don'ts of basic web. This is all in an attempt to give you tips on creating a web page. The main problem with "web guides" is that they are basically just opinions. In this case, my opinion.

Most ISP's (Internet Service Providers) provide web space with their services. It ranges from 1 to 2 megs, and with a little time and work you can have your own web site. Many of them have their own templates for you to insert your text and graphics. Unless you already know some HTML, or have a buddy who does, I would recommend you using a template and then later branching out into your own custom made site. If you don't have those options, you can pick up some helpful shareware/ freeware from sites like TuCows (www.tucows.com) or ZDNet (www.zdnet.com). If it comes down to brass tacks you can do your HTML in Word and save it as an html file (.html extension). Depending on the site that has your web space, you may also need a FTP (File Transfer Program). I'm taking for granted that most of you all ready have a graphics program such as Photoshop or the like.

For those of you wanting to know what a basic HTML page is composed of, here is my basic page format:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Title of My Page</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="#FFFFFF"
text="#000000" link="#0000FF"
vlink="#FF0000" alink="#663399">
<font face="Arial" size="2">Insert your
Text here</font>
</body>
</html>
```

The colors are in hexadecimal format, and you can find a chart for these on any web search (search engine).

Web browser's viewing dimension varies between platforms and versions. Well over 75% of the surfing community access the web using a 15-inch monitor. The viewing dimension on a 15-inch monitor is 800 wide by 600 high. After the browser has loaded you'll notice that there are a few bars of tools like the back and forward buttons, URL window, etc that take up a wee bit of space. This plus the side panels of the browser take away from the viewable space. I usually go with 730 pixels wide by 400 pixels high for my designing space. This ensures no scrolling, but if your page does have to scroll, make sure it is a downward (height) scroll instead of a side to side (width) scroll. Most web residents are willing to scroll down a little, but don't make it more than about a screen's width more. That equals about 800 pixels in height. Any more than that and you need to just make another page.

As many of you will want to insert artwork into your site one of the key things to remember is size and download speed. If you have access to PhotoShop 5.5 then you have it made in optimizing your web graphics. For those of you who don't use PhotoShop, GIF Wizard (http:// www.gifwizard.com/) is a great web based tool. The whole idea is to keep your page as streamlined as possible, since most web users will only spend about 10 to 15 seconds to allow a page to load. Any more than that and they're moving on to another site. I would recommend putting thumbnails (smaller picture about 70 pixels wide by 100 pixels in height). This will allow you to load quite a few examples of your work without slowing the page down greatly. Make sure you resize the artwork via PhotoShop or the like rather than using HTML code to do so. The reason being is that the larger graphic is still being pulled down even though you have the smaller dimensions. It's the difference of pulling down a 100k piece of work rather than a 6k thumbnail. You can set up a hyperlink to the larger graphic for a viewer to select and they will be willing to wait for the full size graphic to pull up.

Code for graphics is this:

```
<img src=http://www.YourUrl.com/
directory/ImageName.gif " height="100"
width="70" alt="Picture of my artwork"
border="0">
```

I recommend that you keep all your graphics in a central folder. I usually name mine either "art" or "images". Two things that are important to have in this code are the dimensions (height and width) and the ALT tag. By defining the height and width you allow the page to pull up faster, as it doesn't have to search for the dimension of the artwork and will load the text first. This way your reader has something to look at while the graphics load. The ALT tag defines your picture, and helps readers who might not have a graphics viewer, or are unable to view graphics, the ability to read and understand what is on your site. Besides, it's good web etiquette.

To add a hyperlink to the graphic, your code would be like this:

```
<a href="http://www.YourUrl.com/
directory/SecondImageName.gif"><img
src=http://www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageName.gif" height="100" width="70"
a t="Picture of my artwork" border="0"></
a>
```

This would go before the smaller thumbnail's code.

If you want to showcase several images, I would recommend having them in a table. This helps by keeping them in an orderly manner and is pleasing to the eye. Table code goes like this:

```
<table width="730" cellpadding="3"
cellspacing="1" border="0">
    <tr>
        <td>cell one</td>
        <td>cell two</td>
        <td>cell three</td>
        <td>cell four</td>
    </tr>
</table>
```

This code makes four cells straight across the page without a border. If you wanted to include a border just change the command border="0" to border="1". To add another line of cells, you would just do the same coding right after the command </tr>. I'll include a finished page example for all of you to review at the end.

The thing to remember about tables is that there is a beginning and an end. You

have to have these to properly close off the cells and rows. You can combine rows or columns with a simple command of "rowspan="number of rows" or "colspan="number of columns". This helps you design within a table and control where your information and art show.

Three last things before you finish your first web page: Font tags, Adding Hyperlinks and Mailto Command. Web browsers automatically use Arial and Times Roman. If you use any other font you're assuming that the viewer has the same font installed on their computer. Once you've decided which one to use you then have to figure out what size. I usually recommend 10pt (2) for reading, 8pt (1) for small blurbs and 12pt (3) to 14pt (4) for Headliner type information. <b> bolds your text, but remember to end it with a </b>. <I> puts the text in italics, but end it with an </I>. (A side note: text in italics usually is hard to read and I would steer away from it). The whole command would look like this: <font face="Arial" size="3"><b>Welcome to my website!</b></font>. When using a table it is important to include a new font tag in each column (td), as Netscape doesn't recognize a font tag unless it is in each and every column.

Adding hyperlinks to other pages is very simple. You just take the same formula I gave you for hyperlinking art and use it before the text. It would look much like this: <a href="http://www.YourUrl.com/NameOfPage.html">Next Page</a>

It is important to put that closing tag "</a>" after the text, otherwise your entire page will be a giant hyperlink

The last thing is the mailto command. You want this so people can e-mail you. You can place this command either with text (<a href="mailto:YourEmailAddress@Whatever.com">Email Me</a>)

or a graphic
(<a href=mailto:YourEmailAddress@Whatever.com"><img src="http://www.YourUrl.com/directory/EmailImage.gif" height="?" width="?" border="0" alt="Email Me">)
that the user will click and an e-mail window will pop up for them to fill out.

Here is an example of what a finished web page might look like using the hints I've covered in this article:
```
<html>
<head>
<title>Title of My Page</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="#FFFFFF" text="#000000"
link="#0000FF" vlink="#FF0000"
alink="#663399">
<table width="730" cellpadding="3"
cellspacing="1" border="0">
    <tr>
        <td colspan="4"><font
face="Arial" size="3"><b>Welcome to my
web page!</b></font></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td colspan="4"><font
face="Arial" size="2">Here is some of my
art. Click on the thumbnail to view a larger
picture.</font></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageOneLG.gif"><img src="http://
www.YourUrl>com/directory/
ImageOneSM.gif" height="100" width="70"
border="0" alt="Picture One"></a></td>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageTwoLG.gif"><img src="http://
www.YourUrl>com/directory/
ImageTwoSM.gif" height="100" width="70"
border="0" alt="Picture Two"></a></td>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageThreeLG.gif"><img src="http://
```
```
www.YourUrl>com/directory/
ImageThreeSM.g f" height="100"
width="70" border="0" alt="Picture
Three"></a></td>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageFourLG.gif"><img src="http //
www.YourUrl>com/directory/
ImageFourSM.gif" height="100" width="70"
border="0" alt="Picture Four"></a></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture One</font></td>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture Two</font></td>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture Three</font></td>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture Four</font></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageFiveLG.gif"><img src="http://
www.YourUrl>com/directory/
ImageFiveSM.gif" height="100" width="70"
border="0" alt="Picture Five"></a></td>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageSixLG.gif"><img src="http://
www.YourUrl>com/directory/
ImageSixSM.gif" height="100" width="70"
border="0" alt="Picture Six"></a></td>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageSevenLG.gif"><img src="http://
www.YourUrl>com/directory/
ImageSevenSM.gif" height="100"
width="70" border="0" alt="Picture
Seven"></a></td>
        <td><a href=http://
www.YourUrl.com/directory/
ImageEightLG.gif"><img src="http://
www.YourUrl>com/d rectory/
ImageEightSM.gif" height="100" width="70"
border="0" alt="Picture Eight"></a></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture Five</font></td>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture Six</font></td>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture Seven</font></td>
        <td><font face="Arial"
size="2">Picture Eignt</font></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td colspan="4"><font
face="Arial" size="2"><a href="http://
www.YourUrl.com/index.html">Home</a>
<a href="hppt://www.YourUrl.com/
next.html">Next</a> <a
href="mailto:joeblow@aol.com">Email
me!</a></font></td>
    </tr>
    <tr>
        <td colspan="4"><font face="Arial"
```
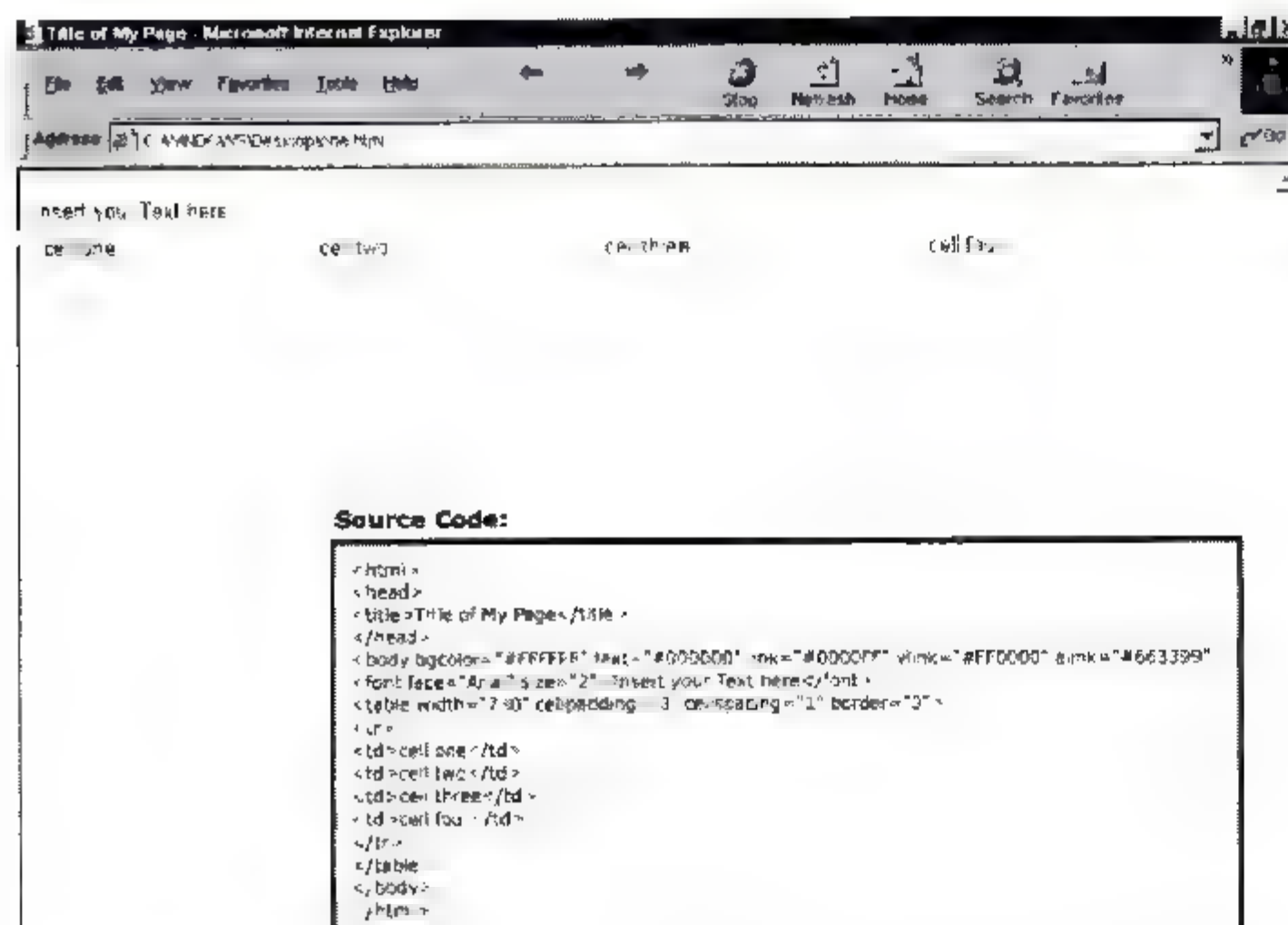


*Table example.*

size="1"> All Artwork s Copyright/
Trademark Joe Blow, 2000</font></td>
        </tr>
    </table>
</body>
</html>

I hope this was informative and helpful in your construction of your website. If you want to dig more into coding or web design, HTML for Dummies or Web Sites for Dummies are both great reference books. Remember that all of us were new to the web at one time and I've learned that there is no such thing as a stupid question.

When creating a web site (homepage), the most we can attempt is to try and make it interesting, attractive and entertaining. The least we can hope for is that it doesn't annoy everyone. (And don't get too stressed out about the "annoying" aspect since even air moving annoys some folks.) Here is my list on how not to annoy most folks on the web:

1.  Don't use blinking or scrolling text. This tends to show the web surfer that you are a web page newbie.
2.  Some people tend to use UPPER-CASE LETTERS or exclamation marks (!!!) for emphasis. An overabundance of these affectations always gives me the impression that the authors are hyped up on crack.
3.  Use common sense with colors. Colors in the same intensity tend to vibrate. Don't use anything garish, as a web surfer with burnt out retinas will be unlikely to surf your site again.
4.  Avoid spelling and grammar mistakes. Trust me, you'll get e-mails titled "Hey, Person with No Dictionary" pointing out your errors.
5.  Use the alt tag in conjunction with your images and make sure they are properly sized. These two items will help with the viewing of your page for people who have text browser and for the loading time of your page. DO NOT resize your image using the height and width attributes as it usually either turns out badly pixilated or causes longer than necessary loading time.
6.  Animated GIFs are neat but they do make it harder for the visitor to focus on your page. Since they also tend to be a large file size, they will also cause your page to take longer to pull up for the visitor.
7.  Frames…avoid them if possible. Unless you are indexing someth ng, it is a better idea not to use them at all. Out of the ten web design friends I surveyed, nine of them began their answer with "I hate frames." The tenth one swore at me and promised physical violence.
8.  I've only seen one or two Java
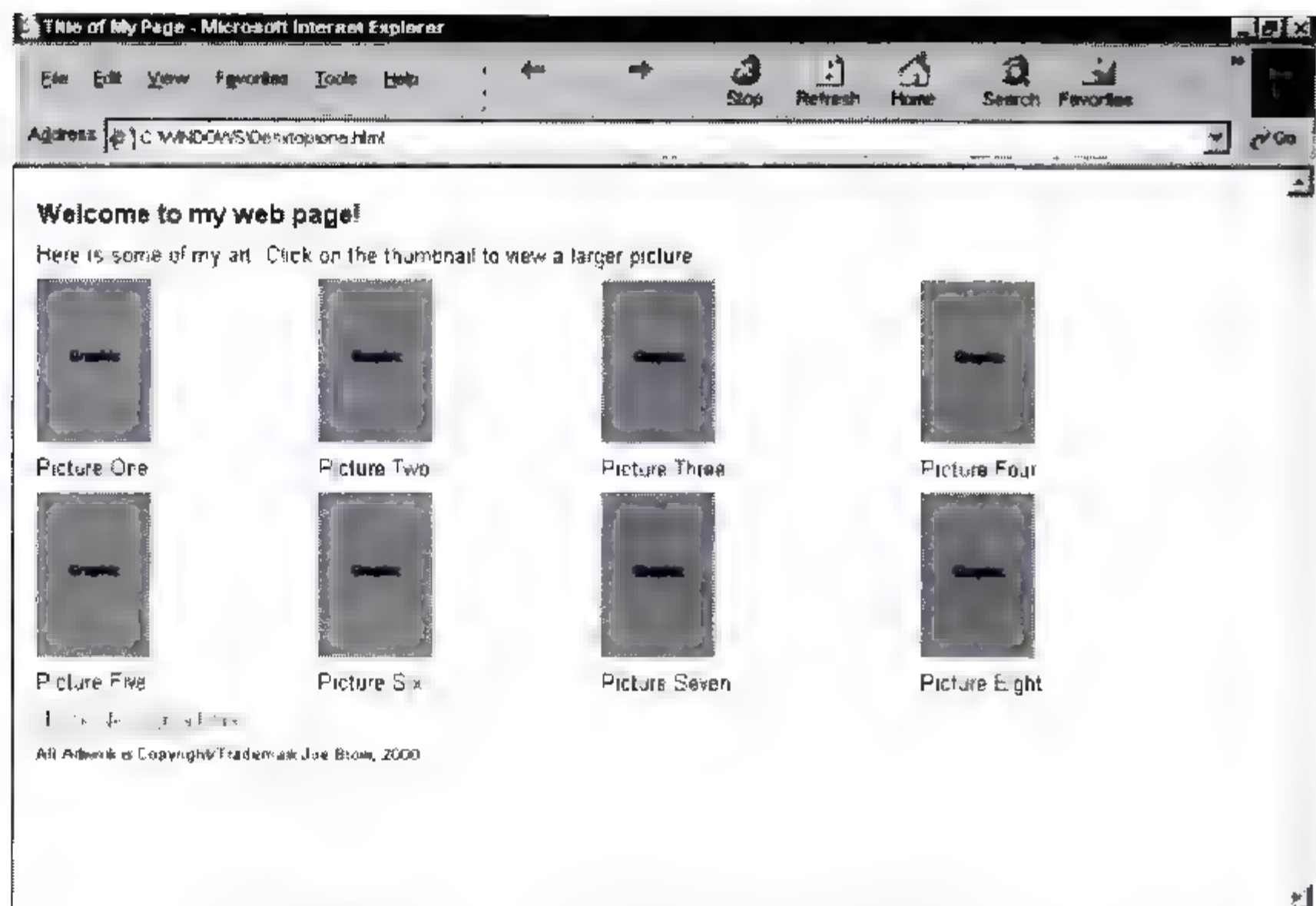
Applets that were actually fun or original enough to download. Most of them just crashed my computer and made me worry about viruses. If you HAVE to have one in your page, don't embed it. Give the visitor the option to download it instead of forcing it on them. Once you've experienced a page w th a sound file embedded in it, you'll understand what I mean. The same goes for Java Scripts. Only use Java Scripts that are unobtrusive and contribute to the design of your page.
9.  Watch out for too many images and too much text. Think about your site this way: Does it look cluttered? Do the images direct my eyes toward important items? Does my text inspire the want to read or cause the urge to burn rubber away from my site?
10.  Navigation is key to your site. It must be easy enough to surf through that a visitor can access the major points of your site within three clicks of a mouse. Since most web surfers have a short attention span, if they cannot find what they are looking for within those three clicks they will move on to another site.
11.  Really ong web pages are a no no unless you are giving out large pieces of information that needs to stay together. Break it up into small pages will cause the viewing to be faster and more pleasant. Rule of thumb is if you have to scroll more than a screen and a ha f, split it up into a new page.

Think of three things when you are planning and creating your web site: **Content, Individuality and Personality.**

Content is easy. All you need is tons of

information on topic or and there you go. I don't care if its information about the sex life of sea slugs. Trust me, someone out there will want to know. It is important that proper grammar and spe ling is used otherwise you'll make yourself look about 75 IQ points dumber.

Everyone possesses a unique perspective that's what distinguishes us from one another. Take advantage of this by letting the world know how you see it. Exemplify your differences. What makes you stick out from the roiling mass of humanity on the web? Let your Individuality shine for all to see but remember .. what you think is funny and exceptional might be perverse and demented to another. Not everyone thinks shaving squirrels and putting them in leisure suits is cool and funny.

I've read tons of web sites that have the warmth of a piece of milk toast and can be used for sleeping aids. The ones that catch my interest I remember and usually keep as links. It's pretty intangible but I think is what I call "spirit" or "soul". It is all about expressing your personality. If you can show your uniqueness, then it will be fresh and original. Be expressive.

But what about the "future of the web," you say? What about JavaScript, Java, PNG's, Shockwave and Cascading Stylesheets? Demanding sea monkeys, Aren't you?

Terri Boyle
terriboyle@bluelinepro.com



Finished web page example

# FONTS

## Digital Lettering:

*"To be a font, or not to be a font, that is the question"*. Huh? In other words, Shakespeare, what is a "font?"

Well, we've been discussing digital lettering for six issues, and have yet to dive into the nitty-gritty of what a font truly is. I believe it is high time we have a serious discussion on fonts, and show a few examples of the variety of styles out there.

To answer our opening question we must resort to your trusty Sketch Dictionary of Comic Book Terms. A 'Font' is a term used for the typefaces that a letterer uses when he or she is lettering a project. Each particular font gets its own look and feel from its creator. This makes fonts unique and individualized.

Fonts come in many different styles and prices. A "word to the wise", don't over pay for a font just because it's used somewhere else. If you're lettering a book that has a budget the size of college student's checking account - and believe me, I've worked on many such projects - don't waste money by spending hundreds of dollars for lettering fonts. Most likely, you don't have that type of money to spend anyway. You can find many fonts available for a low enough price that won't break your wallet and send you to bankruptcy court.

What I have laid out for you are a few examples of fonts, and the differences between them. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying one is better then the other - I just want to show you the difference in style (the shape of the letters), kerning (the space between letters), and leading (the space between lines of type). The last two can be changed with most programs.

## FONTS
## FONTS

Here we have Blue Line Pro Blcomic font shown over the WhizBang Font. You can see slight differences in both the line weights of the characters and style (look) of the characters.

## REGULAR
## BOLD
## *ITALICS*
## *ITL-BOLD*

*Example 1*
Blcomic font offers regular, bold, italic and bold italic.

## REGULAR
## *BOLD*

*Example 2*
WhizBang offers regular and bold italic.
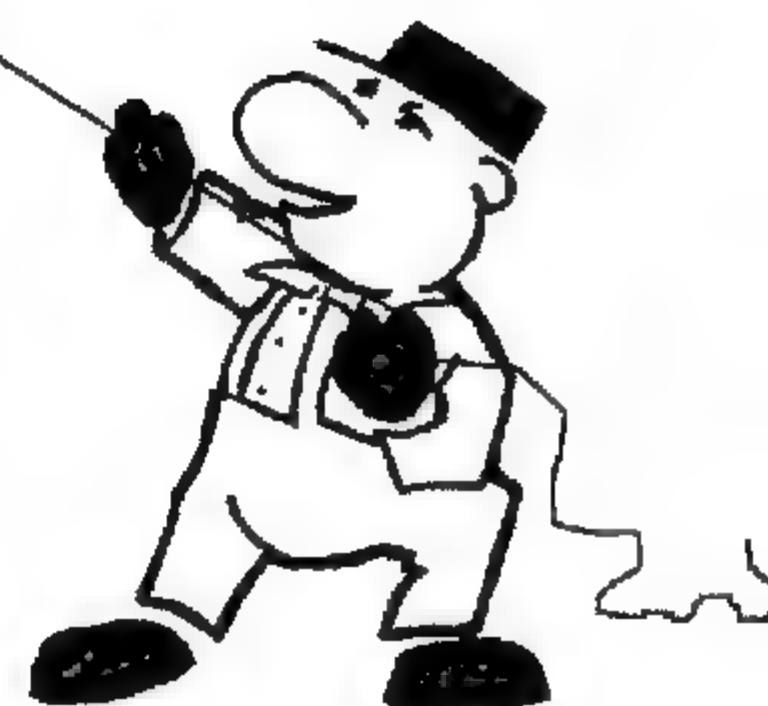


Normal        Special Key

*Example 3*
Blcomic font offers special letters by holding down the shift or alt keys. For example if you hold down the shift key and type the \ slash you will get a different "I" character.

™      ¢      ©

Special Keys

*Example 4*
Other special characters include with Blcomic font are ©, ™ and ¢ and a few more.

A good font will be your key to quality lettering. Both of these are great fonts, and both are being used by hundreds of creators currently working in the industry.

We at Sketch had received a few letters about fonts, so hopefully I cleared that up for everyone.

In our lettering department next issue, we'll be designing a logo....

Ward LeRoc
Digilettering@bluelinepro.com

# Letters Forum

Dear Christopher,

Your tips on highlighting/shading in Sketch are very helpful and I'm learning so much by reading through your columns. I'm experimenting with some published comic art trying to see if the colorists are using your techniques.

The scan below shows my attempts to simulate the way the colorist did the skin in this danger girl art and I just can't seem to match it. I shrunk the picture down so I wouldn't send you too big of a file. Hopefully you can see enough detail but I've given you the URL for theoriginal below.

It looks like they use a combination of lassoing and dodging. I tried the dodge technique (right below her arm) but am finding that it doesn't go on smoothly and consistently as I brush it -unlike the smoothness of the highlight on the arm and forehead of the middle girl (Abby). If I rub it across one too many times it glares way too bright. It seems to create inhomogeneous white dots in the middle of the highlighted area.

Then I tried the 10% white technique—forget that! It comes cross too white-not yellow like the art's highlighted portions (see spot below the first).

How would you say they created the effect on the arm and the face/forehead to make such a smooth transition between shadings? Or is that being saved for another upcoming installment?
Sean Baker

Sean,

I use the lasso and dodge tool myself. I find they work best together for highlights. The key to the dodge tool is to keep it's setting way down. That way it does not wash out quickly. I think what you have below her arm is very nice and a great start. Don't be so hard on yourself. You are much
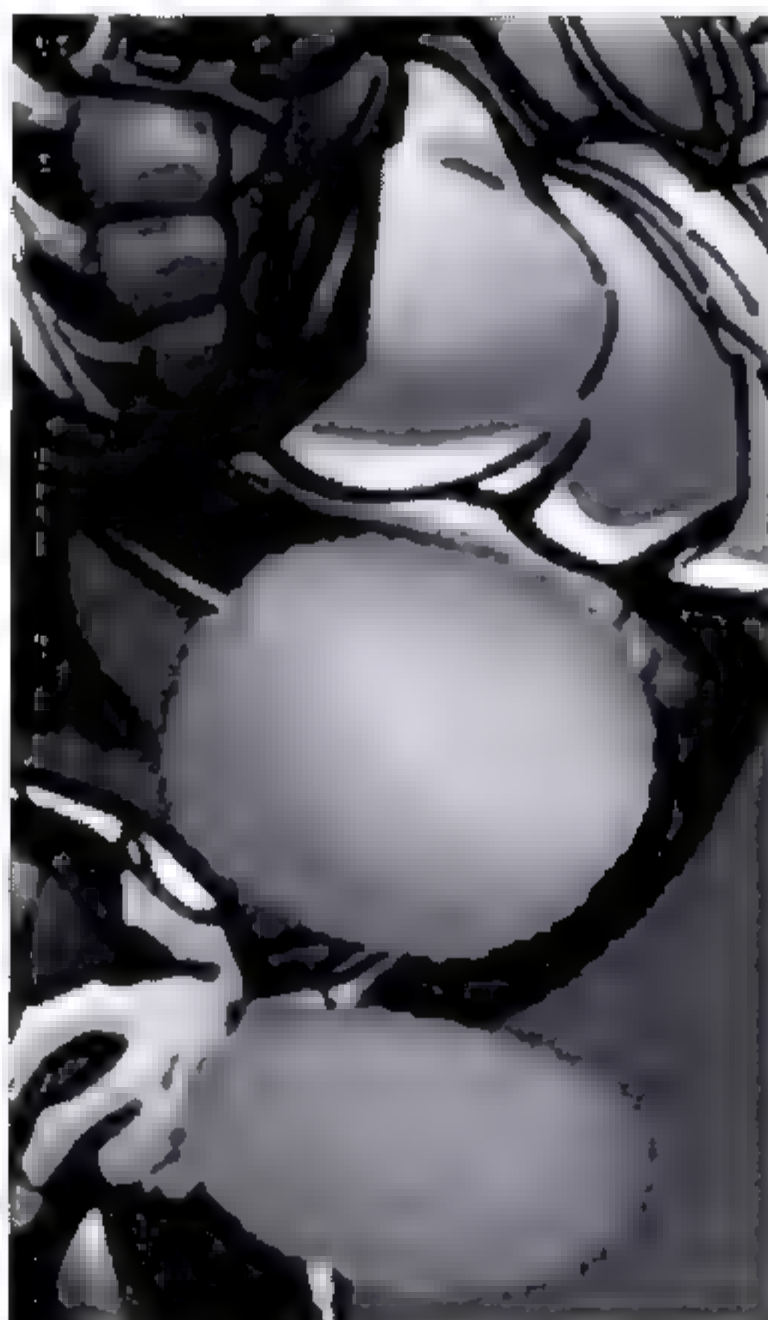
further along than a lot of people.

As far as the 10% white technique, that only works on certain objects. It can work on skin but it really depends on the scene and the mood of the image.

The colorist of this piece is in my opinion getting the smoothness from using very light settings and repeatedly going over an area until it is just right. You have to use the dodge and airbrush tools in Photoshop like you would a real airbrush. Work in layers and keep going over an area until it is just right. I use settings as low as 5% on the dodge and airbrush tools.

This may seem to take more time but there really is no quick way of getting around it. I have noticed after years of using the same methods I have quickened my use of the tools which in turn quickens my coloring.
-Chris

Michael,

I started receiving copies of Sketch several weeks ago... Since you have continued to enclose letters asking for input, I finally broke down... Now I'm composing this e-mail...

I respect the effort and the hard work that's being put into this publication. Given the staggering number of struggling comic creators out there, it seems as if you are providing a valuable resource to comics professionals. With that in mind, please know that my criticism is offered with the hope of your continued success.

I'm sorry to say that I expected a magazine produced by artists to be a bit more visually stimulating. Although I found your articles to be well written and informative, the magazine itself looks boring. You could spice it up a little by varying your font styles and sizes (is that TIMES NEW ROMAN? I can't stand TIMES NEW ROMAN... oops... sorry -ack!), integrating design elements other than cover images and line art, and using MORE COLOR on your color pages, and MORE BLACK on your black and white pages, as well so more technical illustrations and photography. I'm not a designer... so I really can't be too critical... But I know what I would spend my 6 bucks on. If I wanted to learn how to write better prose or poetry, I might buy a journal that looked like this... But you guys are selling advice to ARTISTS, give us a little more art.

That's it... I hope some of that helped... I wish you guys good luck...

Say Hi! to Beau Smith for me... we only talked once a couple months ago...but he's a real character and a damn nice guy.
Michael Carriglitto

**Thanks for your e-mail Michael. It is good to know that there are people in the industry that will take some of their time and share it with us. We at Sketch take all criticism with an open mind in hope that it helps us put out a better product for our readers. As far as Beau goes, he is a character. He's a sly one too. He tricked me out of my lunch money at the last convention and I went hungry for at least four hours. "Why I oughta ". I'll get him back. Just wait and see. -M²**

Wow! I just got my first issue of Sketch, issue 4, and I loved it. This is the type of magazine I have been waiting

a long time for. Just one question really, maybe two. I was looking to order the back issues, only I can't find a price listing for them on you web-site, or in the magazine. On the top of an ad for Sketch in issue 4 it says back issues. How much are they, and can I still get the first three issues?

Lastly, I don't know about the rest of your readers but I would like to see an article on the differences in story pacing in Manga vs. American comics. For example, I saw an entire sequence in a Manga comic that was two pages of nothing but a couple of schoolgirls watching a leaf blow in the wind. No text, no captions, just leaf, girls, wind, and watching.

Thank you,
Zachery Dozier
**Hi Zach,**

**Thanks for your interest in the back issues. We added a section for back issues in our catalog. We also recently updated our web-site and back issues are now available. If all else fails, you can always call us at (859) 282-0096.**
**-M2**

**Isn't manga great! We are currently looking for a good source for Manga information to pass along. It seems that most of the great creators are very busy in this current market. As soon as we can snag one to contribute we'll include as much Manga info as possible.**
**-B.**


Dear Chris

First off, let me say I love your column. I had just purchased the latest version of Photoshop and was getting frustrated with the manual, when I picked up the first issue of "Sketch". I wanted to get started working on my own art and the manual was a minefield of other issues when there it was in Sketch, "VIOLA" your article, and I was off and running. Attached you will find my first piece done strictly on what you had to say about layering colors. There are no filters or special effects and I really didn't use much more than the airbrush, brush and pencil tools.

As to the impact of digital coloring on comic book production, well there I have some real mixed feelings. I love a lot of what I see happening on the covers but inside it can be very distracting. One of the things that I always enjoyed about a well-done comic page was how the artist spotted his blacks to give depth to

the art and to balance the overall look of the page.

It was a skill and an art form in itself and I must confess one I have struggled with for years. Unfortunately today, more and more emphasis is being placed on the colorist to provide the depth and dramatic punch through the use of color. Now that may be fine to some extent but it becomes really apparent when you strip out the color and look at the, black and white make up of the page. The figures are little more that simple outlined shells with no real lines of impact. Personally, I think it may make for pretty pictures but in the end the art suffers.

I have had a good time picking up many of the "Marvel's Essential (fill in the blank)" series. It's a perfect example to see the beautiful work that was done in black and white by some of the masters of the genre. Jack Kirby's work has a much more graphic power when the color gets stripped away than it does with the color. Can you even begin to imagine Kirby drawing simple outlines so the colorist could fill them in to give his drawings punch?

In this election year I would like to cast my vote for keeping the inker and using our skill with digital coloring to make the art better and not just a vehicle to demonstrate our proficiency with the software. I know out there we will, eventually, find a happy medium. Keep up the great work in your column and I'll be waiting for your next installment in issue five.
Your's
Tim Stiles
**Tim,**

**It's very refreshing to hear I have helped you out. I remember when I first tried computer coloring. I was using Photoshop 2.5 which did not even have layers yet. It took many tries to develop a technique that even worked. I spent my summer at conventions talking to the very few digital colorist trying to find out what could help my artwork. There was nothing out there at this time (1993) that detailed how to computer color. The guys at Sketch magazine had been talking about publishing a magazine like this for years so we are very happy to hear that it is helping people develop their skills.**

**We share the same opinions on the subject of digital coloring being used in the production of comic books. The tradition of comic books has always been that the words, balloons, inking,**

**and coloring are supposed to add to the line are, not overpower it. I think the type of coloring should depend on the book it is going in. If you look at any of the Vertigo books the coloring is very light and translucent. If you look at Todd McFarlane's books they use very dark and rich colors. Color can really decide the mood that is set in a comic book. I'm with you on the "Marvel's Essential" line. I have many of those. One of the best things Marvel has ever done.**

**The coloring piece you sent me looks great. I like the detail you put in everything. My only suggestion is to use the color to give the image more depth. Instead of coloring objects in the backround in bright colors use more toned down colors so the action in the foreground jumps out at you.**

**Other than that keep up the great work.**

**Thanks again for the compliments and take care.**
**-Chris**


Hi, Tim Vigil (Illustrator of Faust ) here,

Just wanted to comment on issue 3 of Sketch. The interview with Mark Silvestri was boring. It gave no content of his creative workings, as was the Todd Mcfarlane interview in issue 2. I hope that your cover stories are more in-depth to the working minds of these illustrators instead of pandering boredom of what their companies are doing

**Boring.... Hmmm. Maybe the information that was offered may have been repetitive to someone currently working the industry, but not Boring. If yo have something better to offer please send it this way.**
**-B.**


Hi Mike,

As an artist my self I love Sketch magazine and all of it's great articles and tips. I found it very informative and helpful. I love Comics and have been reading and collecting for years. Even though I took a break, I'm very glad that I got back in to them again. Thanks for a great read and wonderful Source of info.
Thanks J. Heffron

**I glad you have taken up arms once again and fight the good fight in this crazy comic book world. What this industry needs are more people like J. Heffron. With more people excited about comics, the better the industry**

is. What we really need though is to get the young readers introduced to comics so the next generation of comic fans will be stronger then they were before. We need to start thinking about the future.
-M²

Do you have any idea where I can buy shading film or zip-a-tone??
Rick Johnson
**Rick,**
**The good old computers that we work on everyday has just about put the zip-a-tone industry out of business. We (Blue Line Pro) have been actively looking for a adhesive film to print onto but have had little success.**
**-B.**

Sorry to bother you again, but I forgot two things. Can you recommend a good mechanical pencil for the purpose of comicbook pencilling? I'm not sure about which lead hardness and width to use. Also, what do you sell that is used to make comic book word bubbles?

**Thanks for your time and great selection**
**I use a 2mm mechanical pencil with either HB or 2H lead. You may want to try several different leads to see which one works best for you.**
**-B.**

Hey Chris,
I just bought an issue of Sketch magazine the other day and it was mostly for the article on colouring and such. While I have been drawing all my life and would like to think that I have some artistic talent. I am rather interested in digital effects and other digital art-forms, one of which being colouring. Unfortunately it's kinda hard to get any manuals on the subject as far as I can tell and so I thought I'd email you to see whether you could give me any quick tips for getting started.

Most of all what I'd like to know is how to get the glossy look that most colourists get. How do you blend the colours into each other and how do you get the lighting effects used for sunsets or similar things? When I have tried in the past I focused mostly on faces. What I would do is to select an area (let's say the cheekbone) and I'd feather that area and then use a gradient from the highlight colour to the base skin tone to get a fading light effect like a reflection or something...

This seems to me like a fairly laborious method of creating shade and highlight and was wondering if you could help pass on any tips/tricks to approach a similar effect. Perhaps gradients work well with small areas of highlights to bring the textures out. Since I've taught myself everything I know about Photoshop I feel as though I'm probably missing some shortcut techniques to colouring that I should know...perhaps not.

Anyway I guess there's no real questions here are there? Hopefully you'll be able to give me a few tips on shading/highlighting and how to create some visually impressive lighting techniques.
Thanks,
Luke Marcatili
**Luke,**
**You are right. There are not any manuals out there that tell you how to digital color. You are on the right track though. Instead of looking at what others are doing and see if you can re-create it or do it better look at photographs of sunsets and people in different settings. I know this doesn't answer your question but you may find it easier to look at something real and re-create it. That way it is your own interpretation of real life. Now as far as the glossy look. What this does is take real life and give it a more appealing feel. What the colorist are doing here is coloring as if there is a huge spotlight on everything creating amazing highlights and heavy shadows. There are many ways to do this. Using the Selection and Gradient tools are a great way to create this effect. It is tedious and long but after you do it quite a bit you will get quicker. I promise. One other thing you can do is practice with the Airbrush tool. I have got to the point now where I use the Airbrush almost exclusively. Experiment with all of the Airbrush settings. Use lighter opacities, softer and harder brushes, and remember to use the Airbrush tool like you would a real Airbrush. Use quick strokes instead of clicking, holding, and dragging. You will get a more subtle effect. To get the hard line lighting effects use the Polygonal Lasso tool to create a selection where you want your highlight to be. Instead of creating a gradient simply use 10-20% white Airbrush to brush in the** highlight along the selection. This will give you the hard line lighting and soft fade.

**I hope this has steered you in the right direction. Check in earlier issues of Sketch for other articles on Digital Coloring. It has been my experience with Digital Coloring that there are no great shortcuts, just hard work. The more you practice the faster you will get.**
**-Chris**

Hi Joe,
In your "Parts Unknown-The Pin Up!" feature in Sketch #3, you said you draw smaller thumbnails and enlarge them on a Xerox machine to transfer to the art board via light box. Do you have a certain formula (i.e. draw thumbnail a" x b", enlarge y%)?

I only ask this because I usually just redraw my thumbnail sketch on the board but, I noticed that I often lose some of the dynamics of the page after it's done. My layout sketch looks more dynamic and full of energy. I was hoping to find another technique where less is lost.
Thank you for your time,
Jason
**Hi Jason-**
**To tell you the truth, there is no 'certain formula' I use when enlarging thumbnail sketches to fit my final art board size. Often, I'm careful enough to keep the smaller size of my sketch proportionate to what the final size will be by eye-balling or estimating. With the general palm-size sketches I work with, I can enlarge the sketch up to 200% on the Xerox machine until it starts to match the dimensions of my final size. It really depends on the size of the rough sketch and what kind of adjusting you may feel your sketch needs as you tighten up the composition larger. I too feel that some of my best designing takes place in the first initial lines of my sketches. Often by just enlarging the sketch via Xerox until it fits board, and being a little patient, I can keep the dynamic energy my roughs have when I begin to redraw using my light-box.**
**-Joe**

Hi,
I have all my pages pencilled, inked and ready for word balloons. Should the balloons be put on before the boards get

shrunk and printed or should the balloons be added afterwards? Either way, which font size should be used for regular dialogue?

Thanks,

Victor Destefano

**Are you pasting the balloon on to the pages? If so then do the paste-up on your original pages with rubber cement. This way if you must move one it pulls up very easily. As far as the font size, you'll need to print out several sizes and reduce them to the size that they are being printed and see which is the easiest to read.**

**-Ward**

Hello,

I just got a new scanner, so I went back and reread your Digital Coloring column in issue #1 of Sketch. My scanner doesn't have a "bitmap mode". Do you know of any comparable settings that I could try on my Umax Astra 2100U?

Thanks

Jason

**Jason,**

**When you scan it is in bitmap mode automatically. You won't need to make any setting changes.**

**-B.**

Hey there Chris,

I am writing to you because of a problem I have. I cannot find sketch issue #1 anywhere, even on the blue line web-site. This is a problem because the only time it is stated what coloring software to purchase for your PC is in issue #1. Since you are the resident expert on coloring, I was wondering if you could tell me what program I should buy for my PC. I know that you are busy, but please don't brush me off likeeveryone else. If you would be so kind, I need this information A.S.A.P.

Thank You Very Much

Danny Letz

*Hey Danny,*

*I'm flattered to be referred to as the expert on coloring. Thank you. The program you are searching for is Adobe Photoshop. Photoshop 6 has just been released. This is the program that allows you to have total creative control with your coloring. Older versions of Photoshop will work for coloring also. I am currently using 5.5. My best advice for learning this program is to go through the tutorials in the manual*

*even if they are not related to coloring. This will help in the long run and get you more familiar with the tools and palettes.*

*If you have any more questions feel free to write.*

*-Chris*

Hello,

I love your products and I use them all of the time. But my question is when are you guys going to start this online publishing of fanboy comics that I keep hearing about? I could be totally mistaken, I don't know. I think that it is a really cool idea and I would like to possibly take advantage of it.

Thank you for your time.

Jeremy Whitley

**We currently are developing a "warehouse " for digital comics including original material and previous published works. As more is available it will be announced here or at www.bluelinepro.com.**

**Thanks,**

**-B.**

Dear Sketch,

Hi, first of all I would like to mention how much I love your magazine... It is the best thing since color TV. My question is where should I send my change off address to? I want to make sure I don't miss an issue. Anyway, I would just like to say thanks and I am very excited about finding your products and magazine. I have plans to continue ordering both supplies and books from Blue Line. You guys are the best!

Gareth Hyde

**Thanks for the compliments Gareth. We never tire hearing them. For address changes, all you have to do is just notify us and give us your new address. Send an e-mail titled "address change" to sketch@bluelinepro.com and we take care of you immediately. You can also just send us a letter by snail mail if you prefer.**

**Thanks Again,**

**-M2**

Dear Sketch Crew,

First, let me say I am sorry it took me three issues of your eagerly awaited magazine for me to write in. Second, I want to thank you for putting your magazine out.

I have a few things to say. The least of which is not the fact that I am very happy that you have such a large letters section. (Man, I hope that sentence made sense to you). For know I will try to keep it short.

1) Orthographic (or typos) errors- a lot of them and they are distracting.

2) A lot of the things you have written about, mostly to do with drawing techniques and computer graphics stuff, has gone over my head. That means I have a lot to learn and your magazine is a good place to start.

3) Interviews- I am sorry but the first word that comes to mind about the McFarlane and Silvestry interviews is disgraceful and I know you guys can do it better because I loved the David Mack one.

4) Do you guys also think comic books over there are too expensive? I think down here they are very much so. My girlfriend says that instead of trying to bring the Aussie dollar back to a respectable level, we should just bring the US's dollar down.

5) Will you guys be putting out anymore ready to ink pages? I hope so.

6) Do you think it is possible to become a good artist in more than one comic book area (clorist, pencillar, writer, inker, letterer)?

7) Christopher Riley- how long have you been a colourist for?

8) I haven't made up my mind whether I think it's a good idea or not for you to give such detailed answer to somebody's computer coloured work on the letter pages of you magazine, when the rest of us cant even see his work.

9) On that note, maybe from time to time you could have somebody that works in the industry critique three or four work samples from Sketch's readers.

10) Finally, do you guys think you lose much by taking a photo of a model rather then having him/her stand there for hours while you draw? I would thought if the factors are just right and you have the picture like you wanted it should be as good as the model.

Well thanks for your time. I'll be seeing you guys and keep up the great work

P.J. Magathais

Sydney, Australia

Well gee, where do I start.

1) As we have previously stated we've address the typo issue.
2) We do sell back issue if you think you missed something. We try to mix it up so to speak when it comes to article content. Sometimes they are geared more to the beginner and other times to creators with more experience. We don't mean to leave out anyone but rather include more people.
3) Just read the last couple of installments. Our man flint had been adding a little bit of his magic to the interviews. They are much more complete then there predecessors. I think you'll be happy.
4) Hmmmm, that a little out of my field. Maybe you should ask the Wall Street Journal. I'm sure there all over the economic inflation of comic books.
5) Maybe, it is yet to be seen.
6) Well sure. Leonardo Da Vinci was involved with all kinds of fields that he did rather well with. I'm sure that if he were in comic books he would be great at every thing.
7) 8 years.
8) Noted.
9) We'll certainly keep it in consideration.
10) I'd go with taking a picture. Just get multiple shots so you get all the angles you need. Otherwise, good luck in trying to convince one of your friends to stand still for hours. You'll need it.

-M²

Dear Sketch Magazine:

I have just picked up your most resent issue and was greatly surprised (In a good way). You've most likely been told how needed your magazine is, better late then never in my opinion. I read the articles from beginning to end, picking up more as I re0read them. Your topics are well done and I haven't seen one puff piece that kisses up to anybody. Your magazine allows us to know the people you're interviewing by letting them explain what really matters in their own words.

I began reading comics simply to be entertained when I was a kid. Now that I'm older I read them to be inspired and really appreciate the new styles of art that are out there. Recently I sat in the offices of a large network looking to do anything for their animation department. Make copies or run errands. I didn't care so long as I was around the element. After four hours of waiting, the receptionist was kind enough to flag someone down. He didn't listen to a word I had to say and sent me on my way. Kind of felt like a kick to my stomach. I still haven't stopped looking.

As of right now you have an enthusiastic reader waiting for your next issue.
Sincerely yours,
Daniel Kurtz

**Daniel,**
**Thank you for the kind words. I understand you need to work in this crazy field. All that I can suggest is for you to continue to interview and meet as many people in the industry as possible. I believe if it's meant to be it will happen but you've got to work toward the goal. Don't let one rude person slow you done.**
**Good luck,**
**-B.**

Dear Mike Hickey

Thank you for making and letting me join your blue line club. As you know, its difficult to break into the business. Your club has made it easier and I thank you for that. I have include some sketches as my way of saying thank you.
Jeffery Gilmore

**Jeffery,**
**My bother and I thank you for your praise and willingness to join the club.**
**-B.**

Hello Mike,

I am in the process of working on a comic book, and I am using your font software for the lettering. I am very pleased with the results. Thank you! Hand lettering would have taken me forever, and would have looked pretty bad. I am doing the word balloons by hand however, mostly because it took me awhile to find where the balloons are kept (in MS Word). I would like to see a wider range available (such as balloons that have one to two linear sides, say to fit in a corner of a panel, perhaps a double balloon, etc.). Also it would be neat if the pointers (the cone-like projections from the balloon to the speaker) could be modified (making it curve, somewhat concave, etc.).

As for font styles...a cursive font would be nice, and most of all, a font (or fonts) where individual sound effects could be made alpha-numerically (right now a unique effect is used for each letter of the alphabet). For example, a CRUNCH effect, would be available for each alphanumeric character, thus if I typed POW, it would still have the CRUNCH effect.
Regards,
Dave Di Salvo

**Dave,**
**If you use the program Coreldraw you and manipulate the balloons to any shape or size and move the tail in any direction.**

**We are planning to release several new fonts in 2001 to add to our library.**
**Thanks,**
**-B.**



Illustrated by Jeffery Gimore

# COMIC BOOK PAGES

BEHIND THE PANELS:

## Designing A Comic Book Page

*Part One*
by Joe Corroney

*PAGE ONE*

**Panel One:**

Splash page - Establishing shot - interior, Joe's studio: Various Star Wars toys and action figures align the shelves, computer desk, and television top. Reference books are strewn about the floor, along with rough sketches and various art supplies. His desk is cluttered with cd's, paint brushes, drawings and acrylics as he hunches over, his back to the viewers, wearing headphones connected to his stereo blasting Nine Inch Nails as the Sci-Fi channel flashes on the TV close by. He is noodling away on his Age of Empires painted trading cards artwork, frantically trying to make a deadline...

CAPTION: 3.26 a.m. December 5th, 2000

**Panel Two:**

Medium panel, inset to large panel, bottom half of page: Joe, surprised, turns towards the reader as we see his clothes and hands are covered in acrylics; the thick, multi-colored paint dripping off his fingers as if it were the life essence taken from a hapless victim by an intense madman, as if his brush were a deadly weapon...

JOE: "What the—? Oh, Hi! I didn't see ya back there! Come on inside my studio and I'll take ya behind the scenes... and the panels... this month to an upcoming comic book I'm drawing and co-writing with Sacred Studios' creator Bob Hickey."

**Panel Three:**

Small inset panel - Close-up: JOE: The book is called *Blood and Roses: Time Lords*, and in this month's article, we'll be looking at the step by step process of creating the comic from written script to the final pencil art for some of the pages. This tutorial will be a preview of sorts, as the actual book won't be printed until early 2001. So hopefully, whether you're an aspiring comic book creator, a fan, or just plain curious to know about how this sometimes complicated process of comic art creation can be, you'll find the following interesting and come back to future issues of Sketch beggin' for more!

# The Script

Earlier this year, Bob Hickey, Creative Director and Publisher of this very magazine, approached me about creating a new comic book. This would be a sequel of sorts, as he was resurrecting characters and a storyline that we had previously collaborated on a few years back called Blood and Roses. Since it had been a couple of years, I jumped at the chance to work with Bob again. It was at about the same time he contacted me to write for Sketch, as well.

Bob really sold me on his pitch for the new adventures of Time Agents Christiana Blood and Tamara Rose. I thought it would be even more fun to contribute to the series again this time around, as I was anxious to be even more integral to the creation process; not only as a penciler but also as a writer for this comic book. We both had some great ideas for the story, and also for specific action sequences and characters.

First, we'll take a look at the script we have written so far for the story, and then later in this article we'll look at the artwork for these same pages from thumbnails to final page design. The following script is broken down by page and not panels, as it's actually more of a plot outline.

## Page 14

*(In these next pages, we catch our first glimpse of the girls being stalked by another Huntarr. We only catch glimpses of the alien. We see a marking on his armor somewhat similar, yet different, to the Huntarr symbols seen aboard warriors on the Infinity. We get the idea he is definitely watching them closely...)

Show Chris walking up holding a few long sticks.
*Chris:* These should make good spears.
*Tam:* We need to find a place to spend the night.
*Chris:* I spotted something up the ridge. We can check there.

Another panel with Chris.
*Chris:* Have you figured where in time we are, and how we got here?

Close up of Tam.
*Tam:* We are either in the past pre historic age or we've arrived forward into little Vanessa's time.
*Chris:* Well, considering the local animal life, I've sort of figured out that. But how did we get here?
*Tam:* I've been figuring somehow we are the focal point of the time jumps. Chronos has been keeping us in the dark on several things.
*(I also feel some narrative is needed here between the girls, discussing the possibility that a piece of the time stone must be nearby and that this must be the reason their time jump was triggered. Maybe they deduce that possibly Chronos specifically sent them here to retrieve it when he sent them the beacon aboard the ship just as he escaped... perhaps ensuring their escape as well.) -Joe

As Tam starts to say something else they hear a loud roar from the trees.

## Page 15

Both freeze and look at each other.
A close-up of Chris.
Chris: Not again.
*Tam:* Run!
Show a large panel in the middle of the page. A huge dinosaur bursts through the trees. It's a T-rex!
*Tam:* Run!

## Page 16

Show Chris and Tam running toward an open field. Someone leaps from a tree (they are blurred) and lands on top of the dinosaur. Both land in a cloud of dust. We hear a loud roar and the dinosaur raises from the dust cloud, looking very menacing. Then it falls forward, and the head of the dinosaur lands within inches of Chris and Tam. They hear a voice from the dust, but can only make out the shadow of a female.
*Mysterious female:* I knew you'd be back.

So far the script we created seems pretty loose, and is running very lean. Bob and I have worked together on other comic books in the past, so we know what to expect from each other somewhat. By leaving ourselves with the scripting open somewhat, we give ourselves the chance to flesh out the actual story even more dramatically through my pencils and Bob's inks. This also gives us room to expand the story, maybe adding an extra panel(s) if we need to, or even editing ourselves should we need space for more important panels on other pages. Only a few lines of key dialogue are incorporated into the text so far, since the final draft of scripting will take place once all the penciled pages are completed and all the panels are clear y in place. Regardless, this is the draft of the actual script I had in place when I began illustrating the story.

## The Thumbs

This series of drawings is my initial concept designs for these three pages of story. They are small, palm-sized sketches called thumbnails that I draw in my sketchbook. I like to design my pages this small at first, as it keeps me loose and I can visualize the entire look and flow of the page as one design. I find doing my layouts full size right away is often more tedious and not as efficient, as I can get caught up in just one panel and lose the pacing and flow for a page.

I draw these small sketches proportionally as possible to the final 11x17-inch size, as it will help me visualize and more correctly translate the positioning of the panels and the illustrations inside them when I redraw them larger. Sometimes I enlarge my actual thumbnail drawings via xerox to the final board size, placing them on my lightbox and using them as my templates. In this case, as in the next step, I use these smaller drawings just as guides and not actual templates for my pages.
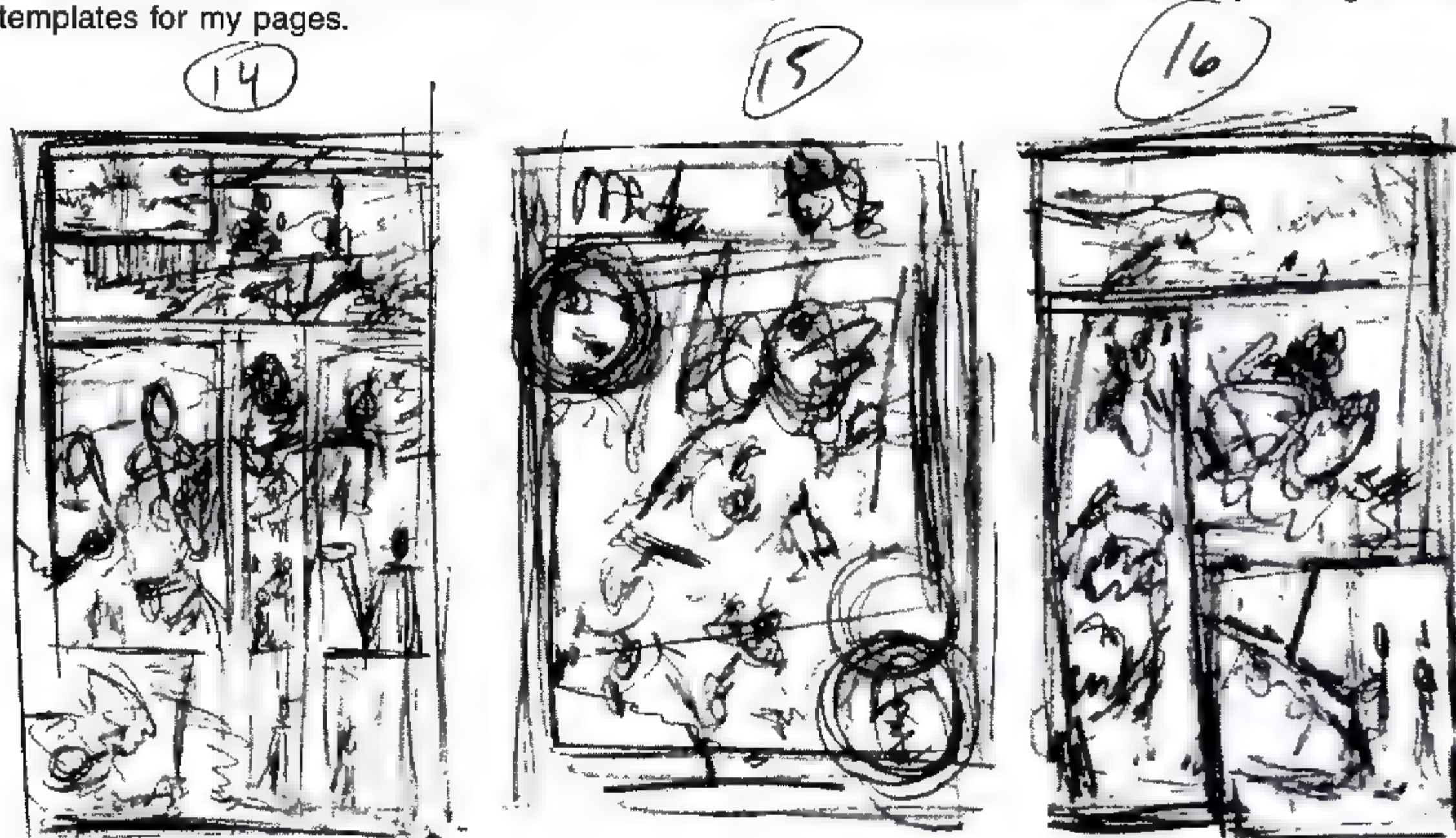


## The Roughs

The following illustrations are examples of the full size page designs, which I draw next by studying my smaller roughs. I draw these at full size on the actual Blue Line Pro Bristol board but am still keeping them rough, as I try to tweak the designs of the illustrations in the panels by still focusing on the entire page as a whole. I'm very concerned with the energy of these pages, as I am slowly building from page 14 to the action of pages 15 and 16. I'm even penciling these three pages back and forth simultaneously, as I try to keep this sequence consistent in terms of the look and feel for the characters and environment.

For Page 14, which establishes a new environment for the characters from previous script pages we haven't looked at yet, I decided on a small inset panel which stairsteps, or overlaps, into a widescreen shot of the cliff. The first panel is a flash of light in the middle of the jungle, signaling the arrival of the main characters as they teleport into this new environment.

Panel two balances out the first panel as the main characters pose on the right side of the page. The cliff itself is almost designed as a compositional device to move the reader's eye across the panel.

Panel three works well as a medium shot - it introduces us to the characters, giving us some nice detail and costume info, but still enough semblance of a background to keep the reader aware that these are the same figures
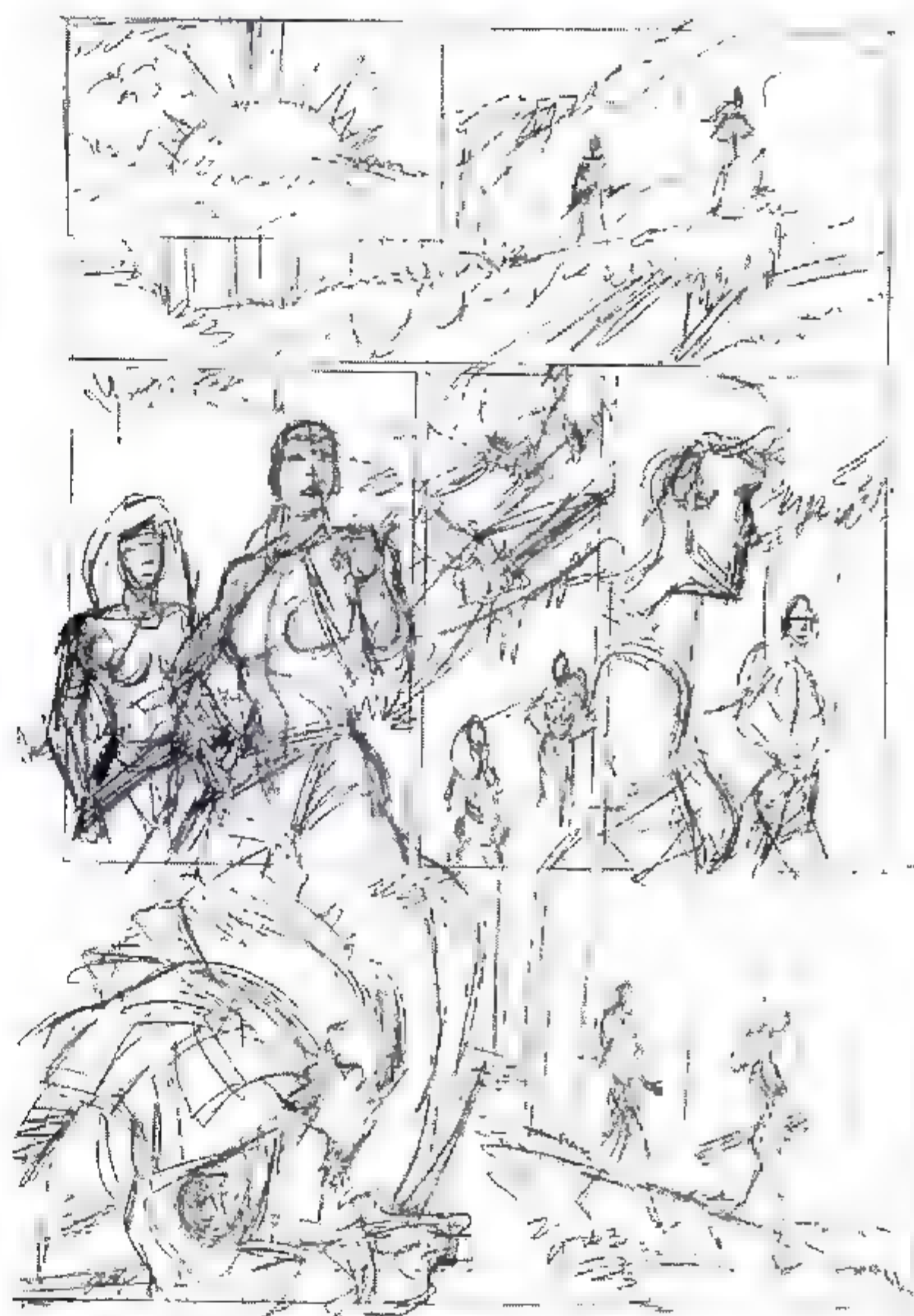


Page 14 Roughs

as the silhouettes from panel two.

Now that we established who these characters are, I decide to pull back, out, and up for panel four, to show they are being watched in the trees above. I plan to use the silhouette technique a second time here, so I don't give too much away about this new character instantly. I will be blending him into the shading of the tree branches and leaves in the final pencil drawing step.

Panel five balances the page nicely as it is a close-up shot of one of the characters, Blood, and a smaller medium shot of Rose; two sizes and angles we had yet to see on the page. Variety of shaping and figure sizes in the pacing of your panels is key to a well-balanced and designed page. You must take steps in order not to be too repetitious with similar angles, shapes, sizes, expressions, and poses or your page design will become flat and boring.

In panel six, we begin to get a clearer picture of the character following Blood and Rose, but by keeping his back to the viewer and his head or helmet still in silhouette with a technique called rim-lighting, we still keep him mysterious. Also, by framing him on the left side of the page and allowing the reader to look over his right shoulder, we become involved with the character mentally; we perceive what he perceives while he is stalking the main heroines. I also plan on designing the character using dramatic lighting along the right side of his form in the final pencil. This will move the reader's eyes down across the bottom of the panel and off the page.

On Page 15, I designed the page as one large illustration from top to bottom. This is called a splash page - it looks more like a pin-up, but serves the purpose of furthering the story, especially when displaying a key action scene at it's most dramatic. For this splash page, I illustrated smaller panels that exist inside the larger panel. These are key reaction shots, and they act in heightening the drama.

I wanted panel one, the larger widescreen panel across the top of the page, to be deceiving somewhat. From Rose's reaction we assume she is surprised by the character stalking them from behind, but it isn't until the large panel we see the new threat of a T-Rex emerging from the trees. I positioned the reader's eye-level at the base of the page with Blood and Rose, then played up the dramatic three-point perspective angle by making the T-Rex seem very large and even more dangerous, with the girls seeming to run and jump right off the page.

I like the design potential of circular panels but I only use them sparingly, as it is often tricky to pull them off right on a page. Here I thought they added a nice balance, as I have a recurring theme of posing the girls side by side down this page. They also gave this page showcasing the dinosaur a kind of 'pulp-Johnny Quest-adventure-comic' feel with the circular reaction shots.

Finally, for page 16, I start off again with another wide angle shot to properly focus on the action of the T-Rex chasing the girls, but still let the reader see all the characters interacting. I also wanted to display the sheer size, power, and speed of the dinosaur, so that our main characters are only a few steps away from being


Page 15 Roughs


Page 16 Roughs

chomped.

When showing action sequences in comics, It's very important to display the entire forms of the characters and to not crop even the slightest bits of their anatomy off-panel. This allows for more excitement, energy and power for the characters and story. You'll notice I didn't crop the main characters in the large panel of page 15 as they are running, and it is more eye-catching and powerful than if I were to crop them off at the ankles or sides.

Just as the girls are about to be pounced upon, a second new character jumps in from off-panel/above in panel two. I plan on drawing this new character in a striking jumping pose without cropping any of her anatomy, and adding action lines to heighten the speed of her movement and blur her identity. Again, I'm going for a balanced page, as well as variety of snaping and sizing for the dinosaur as I focus on its face for a close-up. The long, narrow, vertical panel enhances the paranoia of the scene for the main characters, while we crop in tightly on the dinosaur. This also plays up urgency of the shot even more as we feel trapped, confined, and in danger, just like the main characters.

With the new character now jumping into the left side of panel three, along with the angle of the T-Rex's face turning, it helps move the action from left to right. For variety I try going even larger with the dinosaur's face for this panel, really closing on the action of it getting speared by the new character.


Page 14 Pencils


Page 15 Pencils

For the last panel on this page I have the dinosaur slumping to the ground, fatally wounded, as the attacker stands victorious on its head. I use the silhouetting technique a final time for this sequence. Also, I have our main characters looking on from the right side of the page, stunned by the bravery of their savior.

Though I am happy with my layout designs here, I end up adjusting the shots in panels two, three, and four for a better and clearer design. You'll see this in the final pencils

## The Pencils

These last illustrations are the actual final pencil art I created. I did this art by xeroxing my rough sketches, placing them on my lightbox, and then tracing over my initial framework of drawings on a fresh sheet of board. I trace over some of the lines I want to keep and begin more cleaning up of the composition and drawings in general. I do this by adding more detail and making my drawings more developed while working on the lightbox. During this new layer of penciling, working on the lightbox allows me to keep the layout of the composition consistent, as well as allowing for fine tuning it.

This process of 'fleshing in' my drawings includes giving them form and depth along with details such as clothing, weapons and facial expressions. These important details lend believability to the characters and story. Along with anatomy, I'm also focusing my concentration on background environments which are often overlooked in comic art but just as important as the characters. Using a variety of textures for hair, clothing, skin, trees, etc. helps to separate the various aspects of these illustrations and

the feel of the panels. With some attention to dynamic light and shade, perspective, and variety of line weights, the final pencil art comes together on the following pages.

Looking at these final penciled pages, you can see I like to draw my line art very clear and very tight. This makes me feel more confident when I won't be inking myself and I'm passing these pages on to someone else to ink. This way there is no question as to what the final drawing should end up looking like when inked, and no important details are lacking that could cause confusion for the inker.

One key bit of advice I had passed down to me from my comic book illustration teacher while in college was to think of your pencil as an ink pen when drawing your final line art. If you think of every line you draw with your pencil as a permanent inked line on your page, it helps your pencils to become tighter, clearer and more professional. You choose your lines more carefully and wisely this way - and often times in comics, less is more.

To view more of Joe's comic book art along with the rest of his portfolio, be sure to check out his brand new official website at www.joecorroney.com. - Visit http://www.joecorroney.com, experience the worlds of superheroes, sci-fi, horror, and fantasy in Joe's artwork for comic books, role-playing games, trading cards and magazines.

Star Wars, Star Trek, Men In Black, Age of Empires, Comic Book Art and more!

jcorroney@earthlink.net

Joe Corroney is the penciler and co-writer for the upcoming *Blood and Roses. Time Lords* one-shot comic book from Sacred Studios. He's also focusing his attention on creating more official Star Wars art for Lucasfilm and Wizards of the Coast on their new Star Wars role-playing Game Currently he's illustrating Microsoft's Age of Empires collectible card game, and teaching Comic Book Illustration and Electronic Illustration at the Columbus College of Art and Design. In his spare time, he tries to write for Sketch magazine without missing the deadline... *too* badly



Page 16 Pencils



*Last Issue...*
**BEHIND THE PANELS:**
*White Wolf - Werewolf: Storyteller Cover!*
(Ex. K) should be (Ex. J) and the picture to the left is (Ex. K) the finished cover.
I apologize to Joe and our readers for any confusion this may have caused. Bob.

Computer Coloring:
# The Creation of a Digital Cover

Did you miss me?

My article was cut really short in last month's Sketch. Basically what has happened is I've spread myself beyond thin. If you look in the creator bio section this issue you'll see that I have many outlets for my creative juices (wait a minute, that sounds perverted). I have now added Macromedia Flash design to my list of abilities. Flash is the great program that creates all of those wonderful animated websites that are starting to pop up everywhere. I plan to touch on this in later issues in a Multimedia column. In the Tool Tip section last month, the Magic Wand tool was covered. If you missed last issue try to get it, or make sure you read up on the Magic Wand tool in your Photoshop book, as it is a very useful tool in coloring.



In each of the first four issues of Sketch I have written articles about digital coloring. While this is still my passion, I am going to switch gears this month and show you something new - how to assemble a cover - using rendered artwork, a logo and additional text. I am going to be using a technique that makes that art look like it is jumping out in front of the logo.

The following section will explain the step-by- step creation of a digital cover. When I say "digital" cover, some of you may think "Of course it's digital, how else would you do it?" Most of you older readers probably remember a time when everything was created by hand. When I say "by hand" I mean using a T-square, a piece of art board and a pencil. It was a little more detailed than that, but not digital by far. Being twenty-five years old myself, I didn't have to deal with all that when getting into this industry. I did, however, study and practice the older techniques in design school. Now, in this modern world of ones and zeros, we can do in an hour what used to take a whole day's work.

In creating this example piece I have decided to use a Sketch cover, precisely issue #4. The methods I am about to teach you can be applied to anything dealing with graphics and text - a comic book cover, a magazine cover, an interior comic book page, or the homemade Christmas card you had to create to send out this year because you were broke from buying FIFTY copies of Ultimate Spiderman (just in case one gets creased).

Our main focus here is to pull off the effect of having the artwork both behind and in front of the logo. This has been done on many comic book covers and there are many ways to do it. Here, in my opinion, is the simplest way to create this effect.

To start things off, I am going to open in Photoshop the rendered artwork supplied by Top Cow for the cover to Sketch #4. Now open the logo you are going to use. I am using the Sketch logo, which was created in Corel Draw and then exported as a Photoshop EPS file with a transparent background. It can also be exported as a tiff, or created in Photoshop, but you will have to delete the white background once the file is in Photoshop.

To do this, open your logo tiff file in Photoshop. Once it is open go to the Layer palette. Double click the Background Layer. This will call up a "Make Layer" box. In this you can label the layer "logo". Leave the opacity at 100% and the mode set to normal and click OK. What this does is convert the flattened background layer into a hovering layer. Now, with the Magic Wand tool or the Lasso tool, select the white area around the logo. Once you have just the white area selected, press the Delete key on your keyboard. This should delete out the background of the logo. Grab your Move tool and move the logo around. You will see that it is separate from the background. The reason we want the logo without a background is so that when it is placed over the artwork, the background of the logo will not cover anything up. Now with both files open next to each other, select the logo file and drag its layer into the Image file. The logo should appear over the artwork. (Example 1)

You can close out your other logo file if you would like to save on memory and clear up your desktop.

Now, back to the main file. In your layers palette you should have the bottom layer as your background artwork and a layer above that with your logo on it. Select the artwork layer in the layers palette and then click on the arrow in the top right hand corner. In the Drop Down list select Duplicate Layer. This will create an exact copy of your artwork layer. Drag and drop this layer above your logo layer. Now, with the duplicate layer selected, zoom in on the section of the art that you want in front of the logo. Grab the Eraser tool and set it to Block or Pencil in the Options palette. This will give you a hard cut around the figure. Now click and drag the Eraser tool around the outside edge of the figure or object that you want to appear in front of the logo. You should start to see the logo appear from nowhere. Remember that the logo must be placed exactly behind the object that you want it to appear behind. Keep dragging around the object until
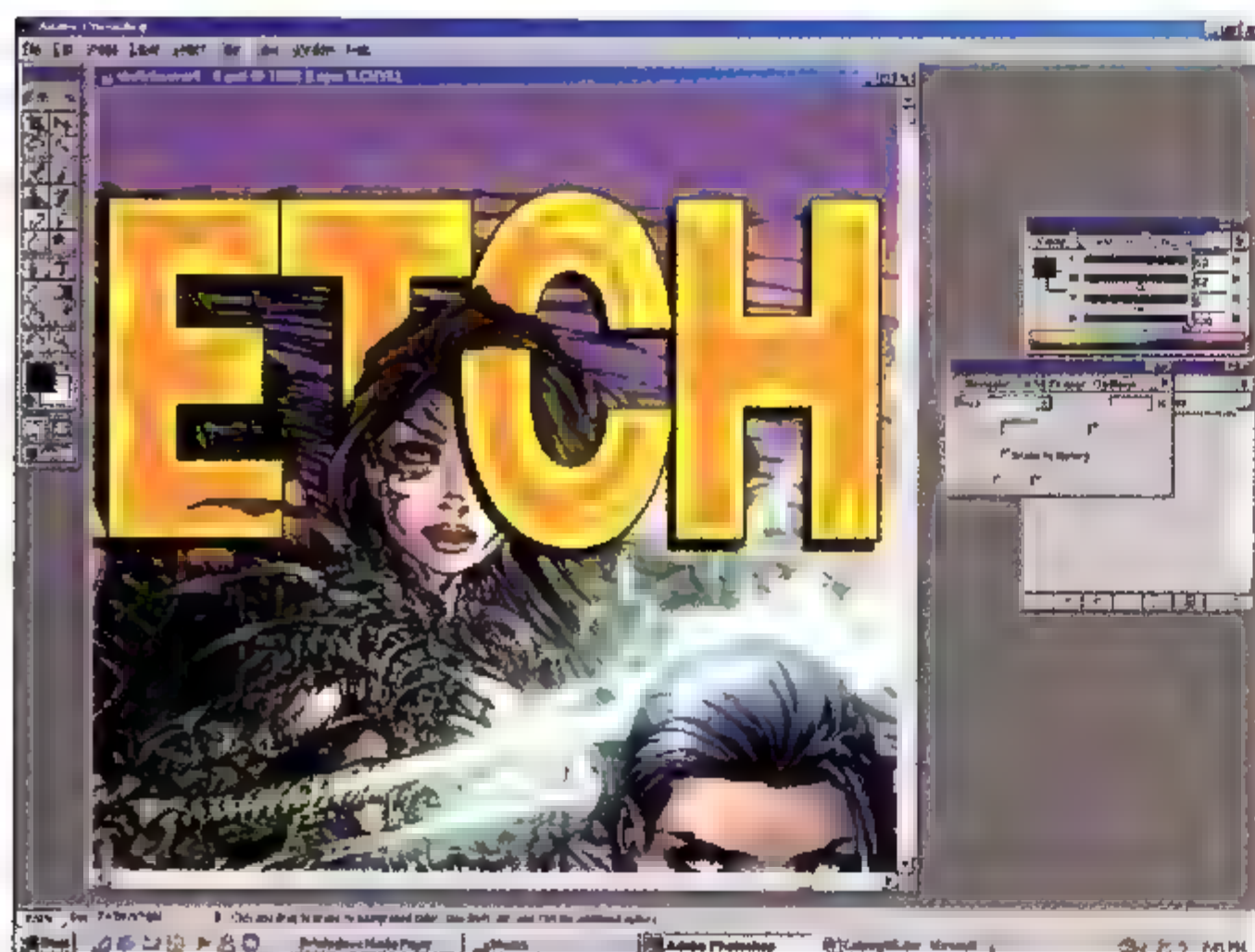


Logo



Main File - Background Artwork

Two Layers


Erasing Logo Layer


Finished

there is an outline of logo following along its edges. Now you can use the Lasso tool to select the rest of the logo area, and simply press the Delete key on your keyboard to erase the rest of it. This takes a bit of time to set up and execute, but the results are well worth it. To reduce the size of your file you can also delete out all of the nonessential parts of the artwork layer copy.

To add the rest of the text, this can be created in Photoshop, or you can export your flattened artwork as an EPS file and place it into Illustrator or Corel Draw. You can then create your text in there, right over top of your flattened artwork. You will need to know something about Illustrator or Corel Draw to do this. I can help you get your file out of Photoshop and into one of those programs.

To place your file into Illustrator or Corel Draw you want it to be in an EPS format. Illustrator and Corel Draw will accept TIFF files, but EPS files work better for out-putting films at the printer. So go to your open TIFF file in Photoshop. Before saving your file make sure all layers are flattened and that your file is in CMYK mode. Now click File, then Save As. In the Save As dialog box where it says "Save As", click the down arrow to access the drop down menu. Scroll down until you see Photoshop EPS and click. Click "save" to save the file. In the EPS Options dialog box make sure the Preview is set to TIFF (8 bits/pixel) and then click OK. This will give the file a better preview once it is placed in Illustrator. Now go into either Illustrator or Corel Draw and import your EPS file.

For those of you who only have Photoshop, feel free to use it for your text. It is not as clear as Illustrator or Corel Draw, but the latest Photoshop advances in type seem to hold up very well on the printed piece. Read up on how to use the Text tool in Photoshop. Version 4.0 and up has many special text effects like bevel and emboss, glows, and drop shadows.

That is it for this month. To all of you aspiring graphic artists out there, remember that you are needed in the comic book field just as much as the writers and artists. Check out the guys at Top Cow and Dreamwave to see how much good graphic design can affect the style of a book.

Hey - I know many of you must jam out to something when coloring. Send me in some of your favorite music artists and I'll see if I can get them listed. No particular reason for this...I'm just curious. I also want to send out a request to you for questions about coloring or areas you would like covered. I will get back to coloring in the next issue.

Artwork by Michael Turner and was original used for Sketch #4. Artwork and A I Characters are Copyright and Trademarked by their respected owners.

# What Do You Think You're Doing?

Why do we do what we do?

When's the last time you really thought about it: as a creative person, why do you do it.... create? And if after you decide *why* you create, what causes you to make - of all things – comic books? Friends, family, and finks alike must ask you why you're sitting there with a comic book in your lap and a half-finished idea or image on your paper or PC? What makes you such a comic-holic?

Is it the sheer enjoyment of just...well, *making* something, and it just happens to be a comic? Do you particularly enjoy the act of spinning a tale? Do you like the display and sharing of your artistic ideas and endeavors, whatever they are, and comics seem to be the most convenient format for doing so? Is it for financial gain, the way to make a living?

Well, it's certainly easier than roofing or construction work, and probably less stressful than being an open-heart surgery specialist. And unless you're Homer, Carl, or Lenny, doing comics requires less of an I.Q. than necessary for handling and operating highly dangerous fissionable materials, so maybe the various comfort levels of comic book production attract your artistic exertion tolerance? Most would agree that doing comics is preferable to doing court-ordered community service, but some would argue over which act produces creativity of merit. What makes you think your stuff is of a competent level to share or display, let alone attract a sale? Or that anyone is interested in anything you

might produce to begin with? These questions might seem harsh, but the oft-heard response of "I'm a story-teller (or artist, etc.), it's what I do", may have validity only to its utterer.

As a creator I'm generally curious about other artists, comic book or otherwise. In my first editorial column of Sketch I asked, "When was the last time you did it?" Curiosity and questioning seem healthy traits, shared by most artistic types. When was the last time you did 'it', that thing you do – drew that image, wrote that dramatic line of dialogue, came up with that idea and storyline you think will intrigue and entertain others? Yesterday? Last week, right after 'new book day'? Maybe you're jotting stuff down as you leaf through this issue of Sketch? Now I'd like to know the last time you seriously looked in a mirror, at the latest racked book, or stared into a coffeepot at 4:00 AM and asked yourself why you do what you do? And why do comics, in particular, play such a role in your creative life?

There could be any number of answers, and even the few possibilities I mentioned could be explored at great length. Ego and finances will probably play a part in your answer. And you'll need some ego, you certainly don't make much or of merit without it, Creative Brothers and Sisters. You'll need it to produce, as well as survive and drive to continue producing. Evaluation of your work and worth – by yourself, your audience, and those that might play a part in deciding if and how your work finds an audience – never stops, and your quality can be subject to change without notice.

Never forget that mainstream comic publishing is a very commercial venture, and judgement of the quality and competency of creators and their work (often in a state of flux themselves), can be very subjective.

Your book might be ranked in the bottom ten of the lowest selling hundred titles of the worst sellers of the last five years of a down market, would you reassess your work? Maybe you wouldn't care? One of the biggest choices a commercial artist faces on a regular basis is their "quality of life' against their 'quality of work'. Does one or the other – commercial necessity or artistic satisfaction – have to take precedence, or can you maintain a satisfying balance? Perhaps that choice never has to be made, you may feel what you're producing is the best you will under any circumstances; but in a particularly tight market you might want to look more honestly at your own work than ever before. You should, you owe it to yourself as an artist and to readers searching for quality product in a marketplace that's tough for both creators and consumers. And even if your material is selling at bottom-of-the unfiltered-aquarium level, there will be eyes upon you other than your own.

Writer/artist/Renaissance man Larry Hama, one of the coolest and most refreshingly candid editors to ever stalk a Marvel hallway, used an interesting personal evaluation system when sizing up talent. In considering a penciler, for example, Hama would say that a comic artist needs both "fist" and "mojo". Fist is craftsman-ship, the ability to draw; John

Buscema has buckets of "fist". Then there's mojo. Mojo is verve and excitment, the "in your face" quality. Kirby, for instance, would be the king of mojo. What you want is a balance between the two.

As I look back over a number of rejection slips, as well as published panels that probably should have been rejected, I find that I've perpetrated plenty of visual atrocities in my career. Lots and lots of mojo, but my fist should certainly have been closed more tightly! Now an editor myself, I'm in the often unenviable position of looking over submissions and finding some. both mojoless and fistless, an interesting thing as technology plays a greater role than ever in comic book production. Without enough knowledge of the fundamentals of comics and its craft, technical proficiency might lead to a job in another field more rewarding to both the individual and the comic audience. Rejection can be cold encouragement, but for many a "magic wand" is that in name only.

Don't forget; beyond your talent and hard work are the usual business practicalities to take into consideration, not the least of which will be job politics. Most fields of occupation have them, and fields involving creative personalities have them to deal with even more so. Artistic personalities can shift and change constantly, especially under the hectic pressure and daily grind of non-stop deadlines and the need to produce. Egos, whether steel-strong or sensitive, can be volatile and mercurial, and affect you and your work. Any of you that have experience in a newspaper, ad agency, computer editing or design studio, or any similar area of employment involving creative types know this. A few semesters in any "art" involved college or institute of higher education will provide an excellent training ground for this career reality.

Be prepared and be smart. I was so excited to break into the business that it never occurred to me my view of the field to that point – that it was one 24-7 non-stop creative blast, filled with nothing but enjoyment, encouragement, partying, hard work and reward, one giant Bullpen Bulletin page come to life – was ridiculous, even stupid. The field of professional comics can be an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding experience, but one should enter it as they would any other highly competitive business arena, maturely and with both eyes open. Treat your work, yourself, and your peers in realistic and professional fashion. The career life of a naïf can often be measured in a few panels.

Know your field, know your work, and know yourself. And after you think you know all three, be prepared to learn more about them all. It doesn't matter how smart or how much of a hardcase you are. Your innocence is going to get injured.

With all these things and many more to potentially temper your fires of creativity, why the cries of "I wanna do comics?" Perhaps you're one of those simply fated, in timeless fashion, to address the great and grand themes of life through art: religion, life, death, and everything in between. Trying to make sense of it all...or just pointing out its many absurdities and atrocities to the rest of us, Artaud? Maybe you're just throwing eggs (or other stuff) at the rest of us? Raw ambition? Complete delusion? Maybe you just enjoy drawing, or maybe you have truly profound thoughts or serious art to share. Why comics? What's it all about? What's at the bottom of all the charisma and chaos and color that makes you, as an artistic individual, look at a comic book and decide "That's what I want to do"?

If you weren't before, I hope you're now as curious as I am. But amidst all the pondering and possibilities, the important thing is to do it. Create. Write, draw, color – create and continue to create, with all the dreams and energy and excitement that all your ungoverned senses can muster and enjoy and express. Enthusiasm is key, the heart that beats in the chest of an entertaining comic pumps on the blood of enthusiasm. That heart sustains comics in the lake of slickly produced and impersonal entertainment that surrounds us. It beats in some of the terrific independent material we're lucky enough to now have available, and it pumps in some of the cool mainstream projects we can pick and choose from to our tastes. Now it speaks to us, and it speaks to a few others with answers to my question. In the future, hopefully, that heart will again speak to many, many more. Enjoy the field with all its many pros and cons, have fun, and love your work and endeavors for whatever meaning they have to you.

We at Sketch hope we're providing inspiration as well as instruction. . Your skills, incredibly important, will grow and develop with you. Drawings can be workmanlike, writing stilted, storytelling awkward, but heart and enthusiasm must begin your work. Your hand will follow. We want our readers/creators to be as informed and enlightened as we can make you by bringing all the details, facts, and information we can. It's our wish that every time you lift your pencil to draw another image or write another line, that it's better than your last – and that Sketch was involved in your improvement. No matter the why or when or how, keep thinking, producing, and doing what you do – comics.

"I'm a comic book creator. I'm a storyteller. It's what I do," you say?
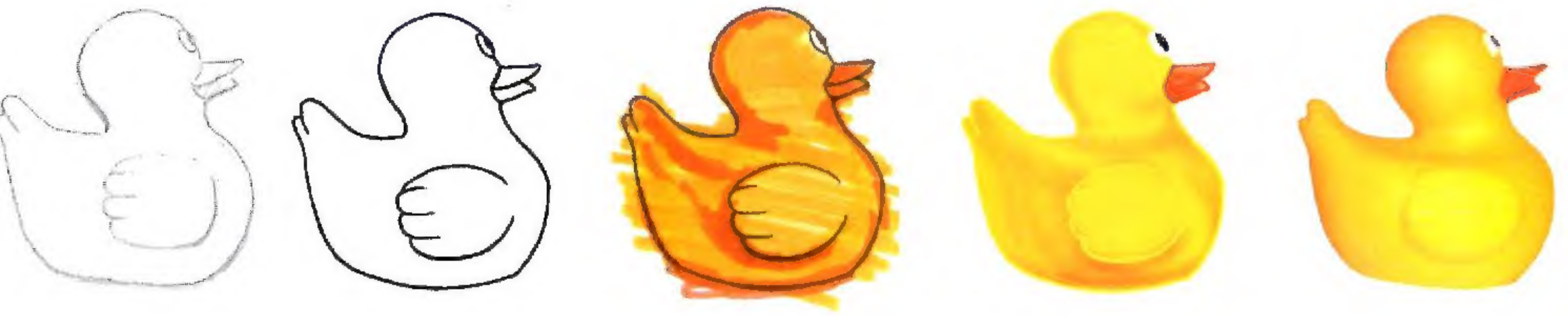
At Sketch, we're looking forward to reading it. And to seeing you here again next issue. Until then, keep creating...

and keep Sketching!

Flint

# Do You Have All Your Ducks In A Row?

pencils

inks

lettering

digital  coloring

logo design

etc...

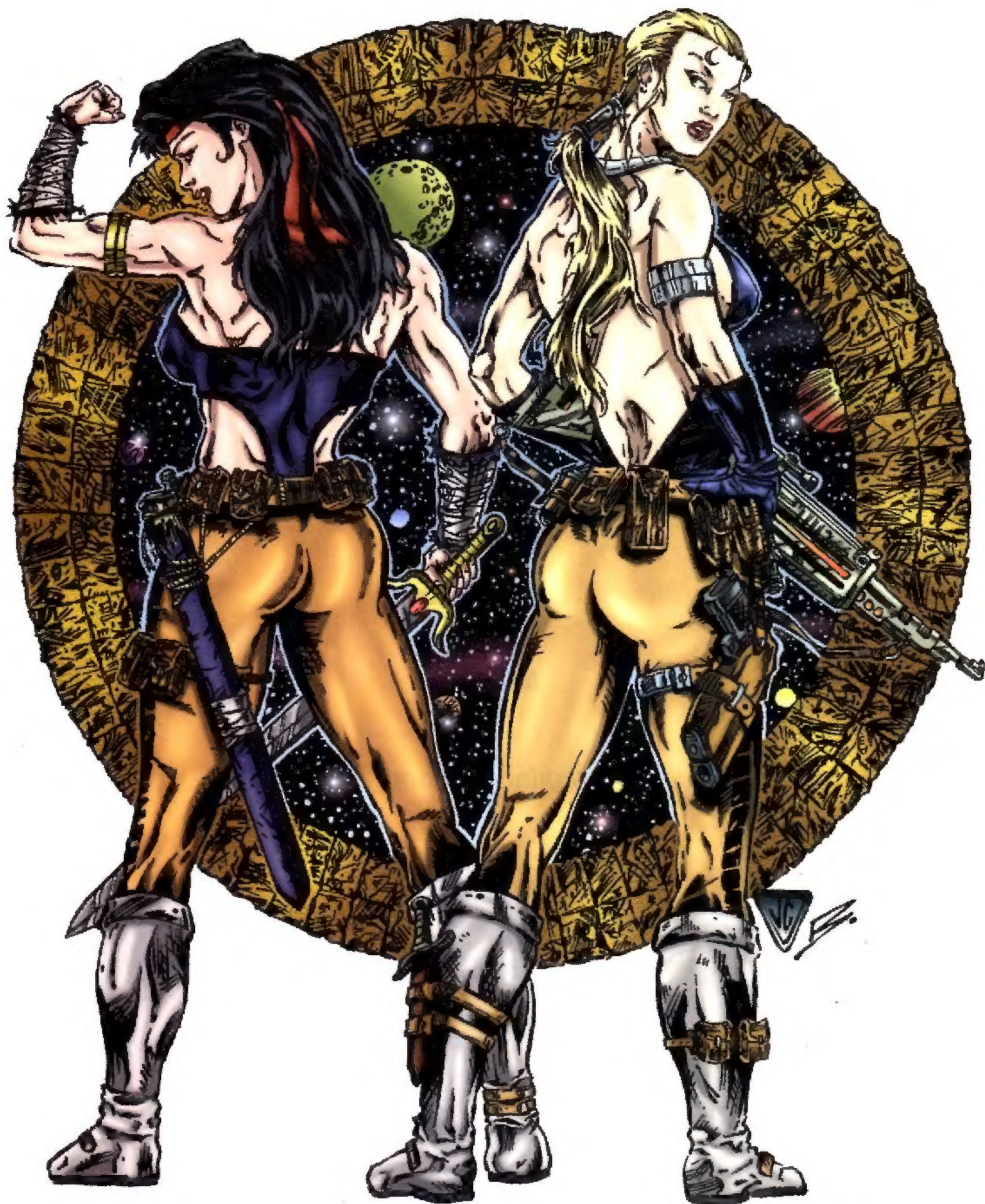# SACRED
## STUDIOS

# BLOOD · ROSE
# TIME LORDS

## BOB HICKEY • JOE CORRONEY

### WWW.SACREDSTUDIOS.COM

ALL NEW STORY AND ARTWORK - EARLY 2001